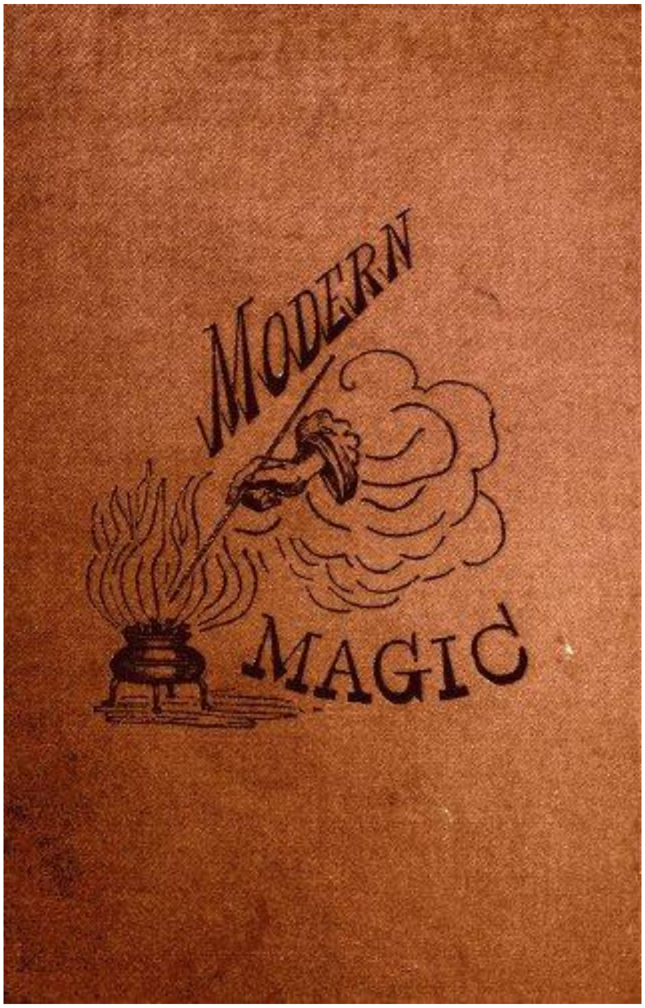


MODERN MAGIC.

BY

M. SCHELE DE VERE.

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.

HORACE.

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PREFACE.

The main purpose of our existence on earth—aside from the sacred and paramount duty of securing our salvation—is undoubtedly to make ourselves masters of the tangible world around us, as it stands revealed to our senses, and as it was expressly made subject to our will by the Creator. We are, however, at the same time, not left without information about the existence of certain laws and the occurrence of certain phenomena, which belong to a world not accessible to us by means of our ordinary senses, and which yet affect seriously our intercourse with Nature and our personal welfare. This knowledge we obtain sometimes, by special favor, as direct revelation, and at other times, for reasons as yet unknown, at the expense of our health and much suffering. By whatever means it may reach us, it cannot be rejected; to treat it with ridicule or to[Pg 4] decline examining it, would be as unwise as unprofitable. The least that we can do is to ascertain the precise nature of these laws, and, after stripping these phenomena of all that can be proved to be merely incidental or delusive, to compare them with each other, and to arrange them carefully according to some standard of classification. The main interest in such a task lies in the discovery of the grain of truth which is often found concealed in a mass of rubbish, and which, when thus brought to light, serves to enlarge our knowledge and to increase our power.

The difficulty lies in the absence of all scientific investigation, and in the innate tendency of man to give way, wantonly or unconsciously, to mental as well as to sensual delusion.

The aim of this little work is, therefore, limited to the gathering of such facts and phenomena as may serve to throw light upon the nature of the magic powers with which man is undoubtedly endowed. Its end will be attained if it succeeds in showing that he actually does possess powers which are not subject to the general laws of nature, but more or less independent of space and time, and which yet make themselves known partly by appeals to the ordinary senses and partly by peculiar phenomena, the result of their[Pg 5] activity. These higher powers, operating exclusively through the spirit of man, are part of his nature, which has much in common with that of the Deity, since he was created by God "in His own image," and the Lord "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living *soul*." This soul is not, as materialists maintain, merely the sum of all perceptions obtained by the collective activity of bodily organs—a conclusion which would finally make it the product of mere material atoms, subject to constant physical and chemical changes. Even if it were possible—which we deny—to reduce our whole inner life, including memory, imagination, and reason, to a system of purely physical laws, and thus to admit its destruction at the moment of death, there would still remain the *living soul*, coming directly from the Most High, and destined to continue throughout eternity. This soul is, hence, independent of time. Nor is it bound by space, except so far as it can commune with the outer world only by means of the body, with which it is united in this life. The nature of this union is a mystery as yet unfathomed, but precisely because it is such a mystery, we have no right to assume that it is altogether indissoluble during life; or, that it ceases entirely at the moment of death. There is, on the contrary, over[Pg 6]whelming evidence that the soul may, at times, act independently of the body, and the forces developed on such occasions we have, for the sake of convenience rather than on account of the special fitness of the term, preferred to call *magic* powers.

There is no evidence whatever before us as to the mutual relations of soul and body after death. Here, necessarily, all must be mere speculation. Nothing more, therefore, will be claimed for the following suggestions. When the body becomes unfit to serve any longer as an abode and an instrument to the soul, the tie which was formed before or at the moment of birth is gradually loosened. The soul no longer receives impressions from the outer world such as the body heretofore conveyed to it, and with this cessation of mutual action ends, also, the community of sensation. The living soul—in all probability—becomes conscious of its separation from the dead body and from the world; it continues to exist, but in loneliness and self-dependence. Its life, however, becomes only the more active and the more self-conscious as it is no longer consumed by intercourse with the world, nor disturbed by bodily disorders and infirmities. The soul recalls with ease all long-forgotten or much-dimmed sensations. What it feels most deeply at first is, we may[Pg 7] presume, the double grief at being separated from the body, with which it has so long been closely connected, and at the sins it has committed during life. This repentance will be naturally all the heartier, as it is no longer interrupted by sensual impressions. After a while this grief, like all sorrows, begins to moderate, and the soul returns to a state of peace: sooner, of course, in the case of persons who in their earthly life already had secured peace by the only means revealed to man; later, by those who had given themselves entirely up to the world and their passions. At the same time the living soul enters into communion with other souls, retaining, however, its individuality in sex, character, and temper, and, possibly, proceeds on a course of gradual purification, till it reaches the desired haven in perfect reconciliation with

God. During this intermediate time there is nothing known to us which would absolutely forbid the idea that these living souls continue to maintain some kind of intercourse with the souls of men on earth, with whom they share all that constitutes their essential nature, save only the one fact of bondage to the body. Nor is there any reason why the soul in man should not be able, by its higher powers, to perceive and to consort with souls detached from mortal bodies, although this intercourse[Pg 8] must needs be limited and imperfect because of the vast difference between a free soul and one bound to an earthly, sinful body. For man, when he dies, leaves behind in this world the body, dead and powerless, a corpse. He continues, however, to live, a soul, with all the peculiar powers which make up our spiritual organism; that is to say, the true man, in the higher sense of the word, exists still, though he dwell in another world. This soul has now no longer earthly organs of sense to do its bidding, but it still controls nature which was made subject to its will; it has, moreover, a new set of powers which represent in the higher world its higher body, and the character of its new active life will be all the more elevated, as these organs are more spiritual. Man cannot but continue to develop, to grow, and to ripen, in the next world as he did in this; his nature and his destiny are alike incompatible with sudden transitions and with absolute rest. The soul must become purer and more useful; its organs more subtle and more powerful, and it is of this life of gradual improvement and purification that we may occasionally obtain glimpses by that communion which no doubt still exists between earth-bound souls and souls freed from such bondage.

There are, it is well known, many theologians who[Pg 9] sternly deny any such further development of man's spiritual part, and insist upon looking at this life as the only time of probation accorded to him, at the end of which immediate and eternal judgment is rendered. Their views are entitled to the utmost consideration and respect. But different opinions are entertained by some of their brethren, not less eminent in piety, profound learning, and critical acumen, and hence at least equally deserving of being attentively listened to and carefully regarded. So it is also with the belief in the possibility of holding intercourse with disembodied spirits. Superficial observers are ready to doubt or to deny, to sneer haughtily, or to scoff contemptuously. But men of great eminence have, from time immemorial, treated the question with great attention and deep interest. Melanchthon wrote: "I have myself seen ghosts, and know many trustworthy people who affirm that they have not only seen them, but even carried on conversations with them" (De Anima Recogn.: Wittemb. 1595, p. 317), and Luther said nearly the same; Calvin and Knox also expressed similar convictions. A faith which has lasted through all ages of man's history, and has such supporters, cannot but have some foundation, and deserves full investigation. Alchemy, with its visionary hopes, contained, nevertheless, the germ of[Pg 10] modern chemistry, and astrology taught already much that constitutes the astronomy of our day. The same is, no doubt, the case with Modern Magic, and here, also, we may safely expect to find that "out of darkness cometh light."

CONTENTS.

I.

WITCHCRAFT.

"Witchcraft is an illegitimate miracle; a miracle is legitimate witchcraft."—JACOB BOEHME.

Perhaps in no direction has the human mind ever shown greater weakness than in the opinions entertained of witchcraft. If Hecate, the oldest patroness of witches, wandered about at night with a gruesome following, and frightened lovers at their stealthy meeting, or lonely wanderers on open heaths and in dark forests, her appearance was at least in keeping with the whole system of Greek mythology. Tacitus does not frighten us by telling us that witches used to meet at salt springs (Ann. xiii. 57), nor the Edda when speaking of the "bearers of witches' kettles," against whom even the Salic Law warns all good Christians. But when the Council of Ancyra, in the fifth century, fulminates its edicts against women riding at night upon weird animals in company with Diana and Herodias, the strange combination of names and the dread penalties threatened, make us almost think of witches as of real and most marvelous beings. And when wise[Pg 14] councillors of French Parliaments and gray dignitaries of the Holy German Empire sit in judgment over a handful of poor old women, when great English bishops and zealous New England divines condemn little children to death, because they have made pacts with the Devil, attended his sabbaths, and bewitched their peaceful neighbors—then we stand amazed at the delusions, to which the wisest and best among us are liable.

Christianity, it is true, shed for a time such a bright light over the earth, that the works of darkness were abhorred and the power of the Evil One seemed to be broken, according to the sacred promises that the seed of woman should bruise the serpent's head. Thus Charlemagne, in his fierce edict issued after the defeat of the Saxons, ordered that death should be inflicted on all who after pagan manner gave way to devilish delusions, and believed that men or women could be witches, persecuted and killed them; or, even went so far as to consume their flesh and give it to others for like purposes! But almost at the same time the belief in the Devil, distinctly maintained in Holy Writ, spread far and wide, and as early as the fourth century diseases were ascribed not to organic causes, but to demoniac influences, and the Devil was once more seen bodily walking to and fro on the earth, accompanied by a host of smaller demons. It was but rarely that a truly enlightened man dared to combat the universal superstition. Thus Agobard, archbishop of Lyons, shines[Pg 15] like a bright star on the dark sky of the ninth century by his open denunciation of all belief in possession, in the control of the weather or the decision of difficulties by ordeal. For like reasons we ought to revere the memory of John of Salisbury, who in the twelfth century declared the stories of nightly assemblies of witches, with all their attending circumstances, to be mere delusions of poor women and simple men, who fancied they saw bodily what existed only in their imagination. The Church hesitated, now requiring her children to believe in a Devil and demons, and now denouncing all faith in supernatural beings. The thirteenth century, by Leibnitz called the darkest of all, developed the worship of the Evil

One to its fullest perfection; the writings of St. Augustine were quoted as confirming the fact that demons and men could and did intermarry, and the Djinns of the East were mentioned as spirits who "sought the daughters of men for wives." The first trace of a witches' dance is found in the records of a fearful Auto-da-fè held in Toulouse in the year 1353, and about a century later the Dominican monk, Jaquier, published the first complete work on witches and witchcraft. He represented them as organised—after the prevailing fashion of the day—in a regular guild, with apprentices, companions, and masters, who practised a special art for a definite purpose. It is certainly most remarkable that the same opinion, in all its details, has been entertained in this century even, and by one of the most famous German philoso[Pg 16]phers, Eschenmayer. While the zeal and madness of devil-worshippers were growing on one side, persecution became more violent and cruel on the other side, till the trials of witches assumed gigantic proportions and the proceedings were carried on according to a regular method. These trials originated, invariably, with theologians, and although the system was not begun by the Papal government it obtained soon the Pope's legal sanction by the famous bull of Innocent VIII., *Summis desiderantes*, dated December 4, 1484, and decreeing the relentless persecution of all heretical witches. The far-famed *Malleus maleficatum* (Cologne, 1489), written by the two celebrated judges of witches, Sprenger and Gremper, and full of the most extraordinary views and statements, reduced the whole to a regular method, and obtained a vast influence over the minds of that age. The rules and forms it prescribed were not only observed in almost all parts of Christendom, but actually retained their force and legality till the end of the seventeenth century. Nor were these views and practices confined to Catholic countries; a hundred and fifty years after the Reformation, a great German jurist and a Protestant, Carpzon, published his *Praxis Criminalis*, in which precisely the same opinions were taught and the same measures were prescribed. The Puritans, it is well-known, pursued a similar plan, and the New World has not been more fortunate in avoiding these errors than the Old World. A curious feature in the above-mentioned works is the fact that[Pg 17] both abound in expressions of hatred against the female sex, and still more curious, though disgraceful in the extreme, that the special animosity shown by judges of witchcraft against women is solely based upon the weight which they attached to the purport of the Mosaic inhibition: "Thou shalt not suffer a *witch* to live" (Exodus xii. 18).

These are dark pages in the history of Christendom, blackened by the smoke of funeral piles and stained with the blood of countless victims of cruel superstition. For here the peculiarity was that in the majority of cases not the humble sufferers whose lives were sacrificed, but the haughty judges were the true criminals. The madness seems to have been contagious, for Protestant authorities were as bloodthirsty as Catholics; the Inquisition waged for generations unceasing war against this new class of heretics among the nations of the Romanic race. Germany saw great numbers sacrificed in a short space of time, and in sober England, even, three thousand lost their lives during the Long Parliament alone, while, according to Barrington, the whole number who perished amounted to not less than thirty thousand! If only few were sacrificed in New England, the exception was due more to the sparse population than to moderation; in South America, on the contrary, the persecution was carried on with relentless cruelty. And all this happened while fierce war was raging almost everywhere, so that, while the sword destroyed the men, the fire consumed the women![Pg 18] Occasionally most startling contrasts would be exhibited by different governments. In the North, James I., claiming to be as wise as Solomon, and more learned than any man in Christendom, imagined that he was persecuted by the Evil One on account of his great religious zeal, and saw in every Catholic an instrument of his adversary. His wild fancy was cunningly encouraged by those who profited by his tyranny, and

Catholics were represented as being, one and all, given up to the Devil, the mass and witchcraft, the three unholy allies opposed to the Trinity! In the South, the Republic of Venice, with all its petty tyranny and proverbial political cruelty, stood almost alone in all Christendom as opposed to persecutions of wizards and witches, and fought the battle manfully on the side of enlightenment and Christian charity. The horrors of witch-trials soon reached a height which makes us blush for humanity. The accused were tortured till they confessed their guilt, so that they might lose not only life upon earth, but also hope for eternity. If, under torture, they declared themselves innocent, but ready to confess their guilt and to die, they were told that in such a case they would die with a falsehood on their lips, and thus forfeit salvation. Some of the sufferers were found to have a stigma on their bodies, a place where the nerves had been paralysed, and no pain was consequently felt—this was a sure sign of their being witches, and they were forthwith burnt; if they had no such stigma, the judge decided that the Devil[Pg 19] marked only his doubtful adherents, and left his trusty followers unmarked! The terror became so great that in the seventeenth century repentant "witches abounded, because it had become customary" merely to hang or to decapitate those who confessed, while all others were burned alive. Hundreds suffering of painful diseases or succumbing to unbearable privations, forthwith fancied themselves bewitched, or actually sought relief from the ills of this life by voluntarily appearing before the numerous tribunals for the trial of witchcraft. The minds of men were so thoroughly blinded, that even when husbands testified the impossibility of their wives having attended the witches' sabbath, because they had been lying all night by their side in bed, they were told, and quite ready to believe, that a phantom had taken the place of their absent wives! In one of the most famous trials five women confessed, after suffering unspeakable torture, that they had disinterred an infant, the child of one of their number, and supped upon it with the Devil; the father of the child persevered till the grave was opened, and behold, the child's body was there unharmed! But the judges declared it to be a phantom sent by the Evil One, since the confession of the criminals was worth more than mere ocular proof, and the women were burnt accordingly. (Horst. Demonomagie, i. p. 349.) The most signal proof of the absurdity of all such charges was obtained in our own country. Here the number of those who complained of being plagued and injured by demoniac agencies[Pg 20] became larger in precise proportion as trials increased and condemnations succeeded. But when nineteen of the accused had been executed, and the judges becoming appalled at the daily growing number of complaints, set some of the prisoners free, and declined to arrest others, there was suddenly an end of these grievances, no more accounts of enchantment and witchcraft were heard, and soon the evil disappeared entirely.

It was a similar return to reason which at last led in Europe also to a reaction. The Doge of Venice and the Great Council appealed to the pope, Leo X., to put a curb upon the intemperate zeal of his ministers, and he saw himself forced to check the merciless persecution. Occasionally voices had been raised, already before that public appeal, condemning such wholesale slaughter; among these were men like Bacon of Verulam, Reginald Scotus, and, marvel of marvels, two famous Jesuits, Tanner and Spee. And yet even these merciful and enlightened men never, for a moment, doubted the genuineness of witchcraft and its fatal effects. Father Spee, a most learned man, writing against the ceaseless persecutions of pretended witches, nevertheless declared, in 1631, in his renowned *Cautio criminalis*, by far the best work written on that side of the question, that "there are in the world some few wizards and enchanters, which could not be denied by any body without frivolity and great ignorance," and even Bayle, while condemning the cruelty of witches' trials,[Pg 21] seriously proposes to punish witches for their "ill-will." Vaudé, the well-known librarian of Cardinal Mazarin, wrote an able work as an apology of all

the great men who had been suspected of witchcraft, including even Clemens V., Sylvester II., and other popes, and a renowned Capuchin monk, d'Autun, pursued the same subject with infinite subtlety of thought and great happiness of diction in his *L'incrédulité savante et la crédulité ignorante*. A witch was, however, still condemned to be burned in 1698, in Germany; fortunately the judge, a distinguished jurist of the University of Halle, was remonstrated with by an esteemed colleague, and thus induced to examine himself as well as the whole grievous subject with unsparing candor. This led him to see clearly the error involved in trials of witchcraft, and he wrote, in 1701, a most valuable and influential work against the Crime of Magic. He succeeded, especially, in destroying the enormous prestige heretofore enjoyed by Del Rio's great work *Disquisitiones magicæ*, the favorite hand-book of judges of all lands, which was even adopted, though from the pen of a Jesuit, by the Protestants of Germany. In no case, however, were the personal existence of the Devil, and his activity upon earth, denied by these writers; on the contrary, it is well known that Luther, Melanchthon, and even Calvin, continued always to speak of Satan as having a corporeal existence and as being perceptible to human senses. The negation contended for applied only to his direct agency in the physical world; his moral influ[Pg 22]ence was ever readily admitted. Sporadic cases of witchcraft, and their trial by high courts of justice, have continued to occur down to our day. Maria Theresa was the first peremptorily to forbid any further persecutions on account of *Veneficium*, as it had become the fashion to call the acts of magic by which men or beasts were said to be injured. There are, however, writers who maintain, in this century, and in our generation, even, the direct agency of the Devil in daily life, and see in demoniac sufferings the punishment of the wicked in this life already.

The question of how much truth there may have been in this belief in witchcraft, held by so many nations, and persevered in during so many centuries, has never yet been fully answered. It is hardly to be presumed that during this long period all men, even the wisest and subtlest, should have been completely blinded or utterly demented. Many historians as well as philosophers have looked upon witchcraft as a mere creation of the Inquisition. Rome, they argue, was in great danger, she had no new dogma to proclaim which would give food to inquiring minds, and increase the prestige of her power; she was growing unpopular in many countries heretofore considered most faithful and submissive, and she was engaged in various dangerous conflicts with the secular powers. In this embarrassment her Inquisitors looked around for some means of escape, and thought a remedy might be found in this new combination of the two traditional crimes of[Pg 23] heresy and enchantment. Witchcraft, as a crime, because of the deeds of violence with which it was almost invariably associated, belonged before the tribunal of the secular judge; as a sin it was to be punished by the bishop, but as heresy it fell, according to the custom of the day, to the share of neither judge nor bishop, but into the hands of the Inquisition.

The extreme uniformity of witchcraft from the Tagus to the Vistula, and in New England as in Old England, is adduced as an additional evidence of its having been "manufactured" by the Inquisition. Nothing is gained, however, by looking upon it as a mere invention; nor would such an explanation apply to the wizards and witches who are repeatedly mentioned and condemned in Holy Writ. Witchcraft was neither purely artificial, a mere delusion, nor can it be accounted for upon a purely natural basis. The essential part in it is the magic force, which does not belong to the natural but to the spiritual part of man. Hence it is not so very surprising, as many authors have thought it, that thousands of poor women should have done their best to obtain visions

which only led to imprisonment, torture, and death by fire, while they procured for them apparently neither comfort nor wealth, but only pain, horror, and disgrace. For there was mixed up with all this a sensation of pleasure, vague and wild, though it was in conformity with the rude and coarse habits of the age. It is the same with the[Pg 24] opium eater and hasheesh smoker, only in a more moderate manner; the delight these pernicious drugs afford is not seen, but the disease, the suffering, and the wretched death they produce, are visible enough. The stories of witches' sabbaths taking place on certain days of the year, arose no doubt from the fact that the prevailing superstition of the times regarded some seasons as peculiarly favorable for the ceremony of anointing one's self with narcotic salves, and this led to a kind of spiritual community on such nights, which to the poor deluded people appeared as a real meeting at appointed places. In like manner there was nothing absolutely absurd or impossible in the idea of a compact with the Devil. Satan presented himself to the minds of men in those ages as the bodily incarnation of all that is evil and sinful, and hence when they fancied they made a league with him, they only aroused the evil principle within themselves to its fullest energy and activity. It was in fact the selfish, covetous nature of man, ever in arms against moral laws and the commandments of God, which in these cases became distinctly visible and presented itself in the form of a vision. This evil principle, now relieved from all constraint and able to develop its power against a feebly resisting soul, would naturally destroy the poor deluded victim, in body and in spirit. Hence the trials of witchcraft had at least some justification, however unwise their form and however atrocious their abuses.[Pg 25] The majority of the crimes with which the so-called witches were charged, were no doubt imaginary; but many of the accused also had taken real delight in their evil practices and in the grievous injury they had done to those they hated or envied. Nor must it be forgotten that the age in which these trials mainly occurred was emphatically an age of superstition; from the prince on his throne to the clown in his hut, everybody learnt and practiced some kind of magic; the ablest statesmen and the subtlest philosophers, the wisest divines and the most learned physicians, all were more or less adepts of the Black Art, and many among them became eminently dangerous to their fellow-beings. Others, ceaselessly meditating and brooding over charms and demoniac influences, finally came to believe in their own powers of enchantment, and confessed their guilt, although they had sinned only by volition, without ever being able really to call forth and command magic powers. Still others labored under a regular panic and saw witchcraft in the simplest events as well as in all more unusual phenomena in nature. A violent tempest, a sudden hailstorm, or an unusual rise in rivers, all were at once attributed to magic influences, and the authorities urged and importuned to prevent a recurrence with all its disastrous consequences by punishing the guilty authors. Has not the same insane fury been frequently shown in contagious diseases, when the common people believed their foun[Pg 26]tains poisoned and their daily bread infected by Jews or other suspected classes, and promptly took justice into their own hands? It ought also to be borne in mind, as an apology for the horrible crimes committed by judges and priests in condemning witches, that in their eyes the crime was too enormous and the danger too pressing and universal to admit of delay in investigation, or mercy in judgment. The severe laws of those semi-barbarous times were immediately applied and all means considered fair in eliciting the truth. Torture was by no means limited to trials of witches, for some of the greatest statesmen and the most exalted divines had alike to endure its terrors. Moreover no age has been entirely free from similar delusions, although the form under which they appear and the power by which they may be supported, differ naturally according to the spirit of the times. Science alone cannot protect us against fanaticism, if the heart is once led astray, and fearful crimes have been committed not

only in the name of Liberty but even under the sanction of the Cross. Basil the Great already restored a slave *ad integrum*, who said he had made a pact with the Devil, but the first authentic account of such a transaction occurs in connection with an Imperial officer, Theophilus of Adana, in the days of Justinian. His bishop had undeservedly humiliated him and thus aroused in the heart of the naturally meek man intense wrath and a boundless desire of revenge.[Pg 27] While he was in this state of uncontrollable excitement, a Jew appeared and offered to procure for him all he wanted, if he would pledge his soul to Satan. The unhappy man consented, and was at once led to the circus where he saw a great number of torch-bearers in white robes, the costume of servants of the church, and Satan seated in the midst of the assembly. He obeyed the order to renounce Christ and certified his apostacy in a written document. The next day already the bishop repented of his injustice and restored Theophilus in his office, whereupon the Jew pointed out to him how promptly his master had come to his assistance. Still, repentance comes to Theophilus also, and in a new revelation the Virgin appears to the despairing man after incessant prayer of forty days and nights—a fit preparation for such a vision. She directs him to perform certain atoning ceremonies and promises him restoration to his Christian privileges, which he finally obtains by finding the certificate of his apostasy lying on his breast, and then dies in a state of happy relief. After that similar cases of a league being made with Satan occur quite frequently in the history of saints and eminent men, till the belief in its efficacy gradually died out and recent efforts like those recorded by Goerres (III. p. 620) have proved utterly fruitless.

Among the magic phenomena connected with witchcraft, none is more curious than the so-called witches' sabbath, the formal meeting of all who are in league[Pg 28] with Satan, for the purpose of swearing allegiance to him, to enjoy unholy delights, and to introduce neophytes. That no such meeting ever really took place, need hardly be stated. The so-called sabbaths were somnambulistic visions, appearing to poor deluded creatures while in a state of trance, which they had produced by narcotic ointments, vile decoctions, or even mere mental effort. For the most skillful among the witches could cause themselves to fall into the Witches' Sleep, as they called this trance, whenever they chose; others had to submit to tedious and often abominable ceremonies. The knowledge of simples, which was then very general, was of great service to cunning impostors; thus it was well known that certain herbs, like aconite, produce in sleep the sensation of flying, and they were, of course, diligently employed. Hyosciamus and taxus, hypericum and asafœtida were great favorites, and physicians made experiments with these salves to try their effect upon the system. Laguna, for instance, physician to Pope Julius III., once applied an ointment which he had obtained from a wizard, to a woman, who thereupon fell into a sleep of thirty-six hours' duration, and upon being aroused, bitterly complained of his cruelty in tearing her from the embraces of her husband. The Marquis d'Agent tells us in his *Lettres Juifs* (i. l. 20), that the celebrated Gassendi discovered a drug which a shepherd used to take whenever he wished to go to a witches' assembly. He won the man's confidence, and, pretending to join[Pg 29] him in his journey, persuaded him to swallow the medicine in his presence. After a few minutes, the shepherd began to stagger like an intoxicated person, and then fell into profound sleep, during which he talked wildly. When he roused himself again many hours afterwards, he congratulated the physician on the good reception he had met at Satan's court, and recalled with delight the pleasant things they had jointly seen and enjoyed! The symptoms of the witches' sleep differ, however; while the latter is, in some cases, deep and unbroken, in other cases the sleepers become rigid and icy cold, or they are subject to violent spasms and utter unnatural sounds in abundance. The sleep differs, moreover, from that of

possessed people in the consciousness of bodily pain which bewitched people retain, while the possessed become insensible. Invariably the impression is produced that they meet kindred spirits at some great assembly, but the manner of reaching it differs greatly. Some go on foot; but as Abaris already rode on a spear given to him by Apollo (Iamblichus De Vita, Pyth. c. 18), others ride on goats. In Germany a broomstick, a club, or a distaff, became suitable vehicles, provided they had been properly anointed. In Scotland and Sweden the chimney is the favorite road, in other countries no such preference is shown over doors and windows. The expedition, however joyous it may be, is always very fatiguing, and when the revellers awake they feel like people who have been dissipated. The[Pg 30] meetings differ in locality according to size: whole provinces assemble on high, isolated mountains, among which the Brocken, in the Hartz Mountains, is by far the most renowned; smaller companies meet near gloomy churches or under dark trees with wide-spreading branches.

In the north of Europe the favorite resort is the Blue Mountain, popularly known as Blokulla, in Sweden, and as Blakalla in Norway, an isolated rock in the sea between Smoland and Oland, which seems to have had some association in the minds of the people with the ancient sea-goddess Blakylle. In Italy the witches loved to assemble under the famous walnut tree near Benevent, which was already to the Longobards an object of superstitious veneration, since here, in ancient times, the old divinities were worshipped, and afterwards the *strighe* were fond of meeting. In France they had a favorite resort on the Puy de Dôme, near Clermont, and in Spain on the sands near Seville, where the *hechizeras* held their sabbaths. The Hekla, of Iceland, also passes with the Scandinavians for a great meeting-place of witches, although, strangely enough, the inhabitants of the island have no such tradition. It is, however, clear that in all countries where witchcraft prospered, the favorite places of meeting were always the same as those to which, in ancient times, the heathens had made pilgrimages in large numbers, in order to perform their sacrifices, and to enjoy their merry-makings.[Pg 31]

In precisely the same manner the favorite seasons for these ghastly meetings correspond almost invariably with the times of high festivals held in heathen days, and hence, they were generally adopted by the early Christians, with the feast and saints' days of Christendom. Thus the old Germans observed, when they were still pagans, the first of May for two reasons: as a day of solemn judgment, and as a season for rejoicing, during which prince and peasant joined in celebrating the return of summer with merry songs and gay dances around the May-pole. The witches were nothing loth to adopt the day for their own festivities also, and added it to the holidays of St. John the Baptist and St. Bartholomew, on which, in like manner, anciently the holding of public courts had brought together large assemblies. The meetings, however, must always fall upon a Thursday, from a determined, though yet unexplained association of witchcraft with the old German god of thunder, Donar, who was worshipped on the Blocksberg, and to whom a goat was sacrificed—whence also the peculiar fondness of witches for that animal. The hours of meeting are invariably from eleven o'clock at night to one or two in the morning.

The assembly consists, according to circumstances, of a few hundred or of several thousands, but the female sex always largely prevails. For this fact the famous text-book of judges of witchcraft, the *Malleus*, assigned not less than four weighty reasons. Women, it said, are more apt to be addicted to the fear[Pg 32]ful crime than men because, in the first place, they are more credulous; secondly, in their natural weakness they are more susceptible; thirdly, they are more

imprudent and rash, and hence always ready to consult the Devil, and fourthly and mainly, *femina* comes from *fe*, faith and *minus*, less, hence they have less faith!

The guests appear generally in their natural form, but at times they are represented as assuming the shape of various animals; the Devil's followers having a decided preference for goats and for monkeys, although the latter is a passion of more recent date. The crowd is naturally in a state of incessant flowing and ebbing; the constant coming and going, crowding and pressing admits of not a moment's quiet and even here it is proven that the wicked have neither rest nor peace.

Among this crowd flocks are seen, consisting of toads and watched over by boys and girls; in the centre sits Satan on a stone, draped in weird majesty, with terrible but indistinct features, and uttering short commands with an appalling voice of unnatural and unheard of music. A queen in great splendor may sit by his side, promoted to the throne from a place among the guests. Countless demons, attending to all kinds of extraordinary duties, surround their master; or, dash through the crowd scattering indecent words and gestures in all directions. English witches meet, also, innumerable kittens on the Sabbath and show the scars of wounds inflicted by the malicious animals. Every visitor must pay his homage to the lord of the feast, which is done[Pg 33] in an unmentionable manner; and yet they receive nothing in return—according to their unanimous confessions—except unfulfilled promises and delusive presents. Even the dishes on the table are but shams; there is neither salt nor bread to be found there. They are bound, besides, to pledge themselves to the performance of a certain number of wicked works, which are distributed over the week, so that the first days are devoted to ordinary sins and the last to crimes of special horror. Music of surpassing weirdness is heard on all sides, and countless couples whirl about in restless, obscene dances; the couples joining back to back and trying in vain to see each other's faces. Very often young children are brought up by their mothers to be presented to the Master; when this is done, they are set to attend the flocks of toads till the ninth year, when they are called up by the Queen to abjure their Christian faith and are regularly enrolled among witches.

The descriptions of minor details vary, of course according to the individual dispositions of the accused, whose confessions are invariably uniform as to the facts stated heretofore. The coarser minds naturally see nothing but the grossest indecency and the vilest indulgences, while to more refined minds the apparent occurrences appear in a light of greater delicacy; they hear sweet music and witness nothing but gentle affection and brotherly love. But in all cases these witches' sabbaths become a passion with the poor deluded[Pg 34] creatures; they enjoy there a paradise of delight,—whether they really indulge in sensual pleasure or surrender mind and will so completely to the unhallowed power that they cease to wish for anything else, and are plunged in vague, unspeakable pleasure. And yet not even the simple satisfaction of good looks is granted them; witches are as ugly as angels are fair; they emit an evil odor and inspire others with unconquerable repugnance.

How exclusively all these descriptions of witches' sabbaths have their origin in the imagination of the deluded women is seen from the fact that they vary consistently with the prevailing notions of those by whom they are entertained; with coarse peasants, the meetings are rude feasts full of obscene enjoyments; with noble knights, they become the rovings of the wild huntsman, or a hellish court under the guise of a Venus' mountain; with ascetic monks and nuns, a subterranean convent filled with vile blasphemies of God and the saints. This only is common to all such visions, that they are always conceived in a spirit of bitter antagonism to the Church:

all the doctrines not only but also the ceremonies of the latter are here travestied. The sabbath has its masses, but the host is desecrated, its holy water obtained from the lord of the feast; its host and its candles are black, and the *Ite missa est* of the dismissing priest is changed into: "Go to the Devil!" Here, also, confession is required; but, the penitent confesses having omitted to do evil and[Pg 35] being guilty of occasional acts of mercy and goodness; the penalty imposed is to neglect one or the other of the twelve commandments.

When witches were brought to trial, one of the first measures was to search for special marks which were believed to betray their true character. These were especially the so-called witches' moles, spots of the size of a pea, on which for some reason or other the nerves had lost their sensibility, and where, in consequence, no pain was felt. These were supposed to have been formed by being punctured, the Evil One performing the operation with a pin of false gold, with his claws or his horns. Other evidences were found in the peculiar coloring of the eyes, which was said to represent the feet of toads; in the absence of tears when the little gland had been injured, and, above all, in the specific lightness of the body. In order to ascertain the latter the accused were bound hand and foot crosswise, tied loosely to a rope, and then, three times, dropped into the water. If they remained floating their guilt was established; for either they had been endowed by their Master with safety from drowning, or the water refused to receive them because they had abjured their baptism! It need not be added that the executioners soon found out ways to let their prisoners float or sink as they chose—for a consideration.

Witches' trials began in the earliest days of Christianity, for the Emperor Valens ordered, as we learn from Ammianus Marcellinus, all the wiz[Pg 36]ards and enchanters to be held to account who had endeavored by magic art to ascertain his successor. Several thousands were accused of witchcraft, but the charge was then, as in almost every later age, in most cases nothing more than a pretext for proceedings against obnoxious persons. The next monster process, as it began to be called already in those early days, was the persecution of witches in France under the Merovingians. The child of Chilperic's wife had died suddenly and under suspicious circumstances, which led to the imprisonment of a prefect, Mummolus, whom the queen had long pursued with her hatred. He was accused of having caused her son's death by his charms, and was subjected to fearful tortures in company with a number of old women. Still, he confessed nothing but that the latter had furnished him with certain drugs and ointments which were to secure to him the favor of the king and the queen. A later trial of this kind, in which for a time calm reason made a firm stand against superstition, but finally succumbed ingloriously, is known as the *Vaudoisie*, and took place in Arras in 1459. It was begun by a Count d'Estampes, but was mainly conducted by a bishop and some eminent divines of his acquaintance, whose inordinate zeal and merciless cruelty have secured to the proceedings a peculiarly painful memory in the annals of the church. A large number of perfectly innocent men and women were tortured and disgracefully executed,[Pg 37] but fortunately the death of the main persecutor, DuBlois, made a sudden end to the existence of witchcraft in that province. One of the most remarkable trials of this kind was caused by a number of little children, and led to most bloody proceedings. It seems that in the year 1669 several boys and girls in the parish of Mora, one of the most beautiful parts of the Swedish province of Dalarne, and famous through the memory of Gustavus Vasa and Gustavus III., were affected by a nervous fever which left them, after their partial recovery, in a state of extreme irritability and sensitiveness. They fell into fainting fits and had convulsions—symptoms which the simple but superstitious mountaineers gradually began to think inexplicable, and hence to ascribe to magic influences. The report spread that the

poor children were bewitched, and soon all the usual details of satanic possession were current. The mountain called Blakulla, in bad repute from of old, was pointed out as the meeting-place of the witches, where the annual sabbath was celebrated, and these children were devoted to Satan. Church and State combined to bring their great power to bear upon the poor little ones, an enormous number of women, mostly the mothers of the young people, were involved in the charges, and finally fifty-two of the latter with fifteen children were publicly executed as witches, while fifty of the younger were condemned to severe punishment! More than three hundred unfortunate[Pg 38] children under fourteen had made detailed confessions of the witches' sabbath and the ceremonies attending their initiation into its mysteries. A similar fearful delusion took hold of German children in Würtemberg, when towards the end of the seventeenth century a large number of little boys and girls, none of whom were older than ten years, began to state that they were every night fetched away and carried to the witches' sabbath. Many were all the time fast asleep and could easily be roused, but a few among them fell regularly into a trance, during which their little bodies became cold and rigid. A commission of great judges and experienced divines was sent to the village to investigate the matter, and found at last that there was no imposture attempted, but that the poor children firmly believed what they stated. It became, however, evident that a few among them had listened to old women's tales about witches, with eager ears, and, with inflamed imaginations, retailed the account to others, till a deep and painful nervous excitement took hold of their minds and rapidly spread through the community. Many of the children were, as was natural at their age, led by vanity to say that they also had been at the sabbath, while others were afraid to deny what was so positively stated by their companions. Fortunately the commission consisted, for once, of sensible men who took the right view of the matter, ordered a[Pg 39] good whipping here and there, and thus saved the land from the crime of another witches' trial.

Our own experiences in New England, at the time when Sir William Phipps was governor of the colonies, have been forcibly reported by the great Cotton Mather. Nearly every community had its young men and women who were addicted to the practices of magic; they loved to perform enchantments, to consult sieves and turning keys, and thus were gradually led to attempt more serious and more dangerous practices. In Salem, men and women of high standing and unimpeached integrity, even pious members of the church, were suddenly plagued and tortured by unknown agencies, and at last a little black and yellow demon appeared to them, accompanied by a number of companions with human faces. These apparitions presented to them a book which they were summoned to sign or at least to touch, and if they refused they were fearfully twisted and turned about, pricked with pins, burnt as if with hot irons, bound hand and foot with invisible fetters, and carried away to great distances. Some were left unable to touch food or drink for many days; others, attempting to defend themselves against the demons, snatched a distaff or tore a piece of cloth from them, and immediately these proofs of the real existence of the evil spirits became visible to the eyes of the bystanders. The magic phenomena attending the disease were of the most extraordinary character.[Pg 40] Several men stated that they had received poison because they declined to worship Satan, and immediately all the usual sequences of such treatment appeared, from simple vomiting to most fearful suffering, till counteracting remedies were employed and began to take effect. In other cases the sufferers complained of burning rags being stuffed into their mouths, and although nothing was seen, burnt places and blisters appeared, and the odor and smoke of smouldering rags began to fill the room. When they reported that they were branded with hot irons, the marks showed themselves, suppuration took place, and scars were formed which never again disappeared during life—and

all these phenomena were watched by the eager eyes of hundreds. The authorities, of course, took hold of the matter, and many persons of both sexes and all ages were brought to trial. While they were tortured they continued to have visions of demoniac beings and possessed men and women; when they were standing, blindfolded, in court, felt the approach of those by whom they pretended to be bewitched and plagued, and urgently prayed to be delivered of their presence. Finally many were executed, not a few undoubtedly against all justice, but the better sense of the authorities soon saw the futility, if not the wickedness of such proceedings, and an end was made promptly, witchcraft disappearing as soon as persecution relaxed and the sensation subsided.[Pg 41]

Similar trials have nevertheless continued to be held in various parts of Europe during the whole of the last century, and many innocent lives have been forfeited to this apparently ineradicable belief in witchcraft. Even after torture was abandoned in compliance with the wiser views of our age, long imprisonment with its attending sufferings and great anxiety as to the issue, proved fully sufficient to extort voluntary confessions, which were, of course, of no value in themselves, but served the purpose of keeping alive the popular superstition. In 1728 a specially fearful trial of this kind took place in Hungary, during which nearly all the disgraceful scenes of mediæval barbarity were reënacted, and which ended in a number of cruel executions. The last witches' trial in Germany took place in 1749, when the mother-superior of a convent near Würzburg, in Bavaria, known as Emma Renata, was condemned to be burnt, but by the leniency of the authorities, was allowed to die by decapitation. Switzerland was the scene of the last of these trials ever held, for with this act of justice, as it was called by the good people of Glarus, the persecution ended.

Even in England, however, the feeling itself seems to have lingered long after actual trials had ceased. Thus it is well known that the terrible trial of witches held at Marlboro, under Queen Elizabeth, led to the establishment of a so-called witches' sermon to be delivered annually at Huntingdon, and this custom was faithfully observed down to the latter part of the eighteenth[Pg 42] century. Nearly about the same time—in 1743—an earnest effort was made in Scotland to kindle once more the fire of fierce persecution. In the month of February of that year, the Associate Presbytery, in a public document addressed to the Presbytery of the Seceded Churches, required for certain purposes a solemn acknowledgment of former sins, and a vow to renounce them forever. Among these sins that austere body enumerated the "*abolition* of the death penalty for witchcraft," since the latter was forbidden in Holy Writ, and the leniency which had taken the place of the former severity in punishing this crime, had given an opening to Satan to tempt and actually to seduce others by means of the same old accursed and dangerous snares.—(*Edinb. Rev.*, Jan. 1847.)[Pg 43]

II.

BLACK AND WHITE MAGIC.

"Peace!—the charm's wound up."—MACBETH.

The most startling of all scenes described in Holy Writ—as far as they represent incidents in human life—is, no doubt, the mysterious interview between unfortunate King Saul and the spirit of his former patron, the prophet Samuel. The poor monarch, abandoned by his friends and forsaken by his own heart, turns in his utter wretchedness to those whom he had but shortly before "put out of the land," those godless people who "had familiar spirits and the wizards." Hard pressed by the ancient enemy of his people, the Philistine, and unable to obtain an answer from the great God of his fathers, he stoops to consult a witch, a woman. It seems that Sedecla, the daughter of the Decemdiabite—for so Philo calls her according to Des Mousseaux—had escaped by her cunning from the fate of her weird sisters, and, having a familiar spirit, foretold the future to curious enquirers at her dwelling in Endor. At first she is unwilling to incur the penalty threatened in the king's decree, but when the disguised monarch, with a voice of authority promises her impunity, she consents to "bring up Samuel." As soon[Pg 44] as the fearful phantom of the dread prophet appears, she becomes instinctively aware of the true character of her visitor, and, far more afraid of the power of the living than of the appearance of the departed, she cries out trembling: "Why hast thou deceived me? Thou art Saul!" Then follows the appalling scene in which Samuel reproves the miserable, self-despairing king, and foretells his death and that of his sons.

There can be no doubt that we have here before us an instance of genuine magic. The woman was evidently capable of casting herself into a state of ecstasy, in which she could at once look back into the past and forward into the future. Thus she beholds the great prophet, not sent by God from on high, as the Holy Fathers generally taught, but according to the then prevailing belief, rising from Sheol, the place of departed spirits, and then she utters, unconsciously, his own words. For it must not be overlooked that Samuel makes no revelations, but only repeats his former warnings. Saul learns absolutely nothing new from him; he only hears the same threatenings which the prophet had pronounced twice before, when the reckless king had dared to sacrifice unto God with his own hand (I. Sam. xiii.), and when he had failed to smite the Amalekite, as he was bidden. Possessed, as it were, by the spirit of the living Samuel, the woman speaks as he had spoken in his lifetime, and it is only when her state of exaltation renders her capable of looking into the future also, that she assumes the part[Pg 45] of a prophetess herself, and foretells the approaching doom of her royal visitor.

That the whole dread scene was fore-ordained and could take place only by the will of the Almighty, alters nothing in the character of the woman with the familiar spirit. It is a clear case of necromancy, or conjuring up of the spirits of departed persons, such as has been practised among men from time immemorial. Among the chosen people of God persons were found from the beginning of their history who had familiar spirits, and Moses already fulminates his severest anathemas against these wizards (Lev. xx. 27). They appear under various aspects, as charmers, as consulters of familiar spirits, as wizards, or as necromancers (Deut. xviii. 11); they are charged with passing their children through the fire, with observing times (astrologers); with using enchantments; or they are said in a general way to "use witchcraft" (II. Chron. xxxiii. 6).

That other nations were not less familiar with the art of evoking spirits, we see, for instance, in the "Odyssey," which mentions numerous cases of such intercourse with another world, and speaks of necromancers as forming a kind of close guild. In the "Persius" of Æschylus the spirit of Darius, father of Xerxes, is called up and foretells all the misfortunes that are to befall poor Queen Atossa. The greatest among the stern Romans could not entirely shake off the belief in such magic, in spite of the matter-of-fact tendencies of the Roman mind, and the vast superiority of their in[Pg 46]telligence. A Cato and a Sylla, a Cæsar and a Vespasian, all admitted, with clear unfailing perception, the small grains of truth that lay concealed among the mass of rubbish then called magic. Even Christian theology has never absolutely denied the existence of such extraordinary powers over the spirits of the departed, although it has consistently attributed them to diabolic influences.

In this point lies the main difference between ancient and modern magic. For the oldest Magi whom we know were the wise men of Persia, called, from *mah* (great), Mugh, the great men of the land. They were the philosophers of their day, and, if we believe the impartial evidence of Greek writers—not generally apt to overestimate the merits of other nations—they were possessed of vast and varied information. Their aim was the loftiest ever conceived by human ambition; it was, in fact, nothing less than the erection of an intellectual Tower of Babel. They devoted the labors of a lifetime, and the full, well-trained vigor of their intelligence to the study of the forces of nature, and the true character of all created beings. Among the latter they included disembodied spirits as well as those still bound up with bodies made of earth, considering with a wisdom and boldness of conception never yet surpassed, both classes as one and the same eternal creation. The knowledge thus acquired they were, moreover, not disposed merely to store away in their memory, or to record in unattractive manuscripts;[Pg 47] they were men of the world as well as philosophers, and looked for practical results. Here the pagan spirit shone forth unrestrained; the end and aim of all their restless labors was Power. Their ambition was to control, by the superior prestige of their knowledge, not only the mechanical forces of Nature, but also the lesser capacities of other created beings, and finally Fate itself! Truly a lofty and noble aim if we view it, as in equity we are bound to do, from their stand-point, as men possessing, with all the wisdom of the earth, as yet not a particle of revealed religion.

It was only at a much later period that a distinction was made between White Magic and Black Magic. This arose from the error which gradually overspread the minds of men, that such extraordinary powers—based, originally, only upon extraordinary knowledge—were not naturally given to men; but, could only be obtained by the special favor of higher beings, with whom the owner must needs enter into a perilous league. If these were benevolent deities, the results obtained by their assistance were called White Magic; if they were gods of ill-repute, they granted the power to perform feats of Black Magic, acts of wickedness, and crimes. Christianity, though it abolished the gods of paganism, maintained, nevertheless, the belief in extraordinary powers accorded by supernatural beings, and the same distinction continued to be made. Pious men and women performed miracles by the aid of angels and saints; wicked sinners did as much by an[Pg 48] unholy league with the Evil One. The Egyptian charmer, of Apulejus, who declared that no miracle was too difficult for his art, since he exercised the blind power of deities who were subject to his will, only expressed what the lazzarone of Naples feels in our day, when he whips his saint with a bundle of reeds, in order to compel him to do his bidding. Magicians did not change their doctrine; they hardly even modified their ceremonies; their allegiance only was transferred from Jupiter to Jehovah, even as the same column that once bore

the great Thunderer on Olympus, is now crowned by a statue of Peter Boanerges. Nor has the race of magicians ever entirely died out; we find enough notices in classic authors, whose evidence is unimpeachable, to know that the Greeks were apt scholars of the ancient Magi and transferred the knowledge they had thus obtained and long jealously guarded, to the priests of Egypt, who in their turn became the masters of the two mightiest nations on earth. First Moses sat at their feet till, at the age of forty, he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and could successfully cope with their "magicians and sorcerers." Then the land of the Nile fell into the hands of the Romans, and poverty and neglect drove the wise men of Egypt to seek refuge in the capital of the world, where they either lived upon the minor arts and cunning tricks of their false fate, or, being converted to Christianity, infected the pure faith with their ill-applied knowledge. Certain portions of true magic[Pg 49] survived through all persecutions and revolutions; some precious secrets were preserved by the philosophers of later ages and have—if we believe the statements made by trustworthy writers of every century—ever since continued in the possession of Freemasons and Rosicrucians; others became mixed up with vile superstitions and impious practices, and only exist now as the Black Art of so-called magicians and witches.

Wherever magic found a fertile soil among the people, it became a science, handed down from father to son, and such we find it still in the East Indies and the Orient generally; when it fell into the hands of skeptics, or weak, feeble-minded men, it degenerated with amazing speed into imposture and common jugglery. What is evident about magic is the well-established fact that its ceremonies, forms, and all other accessories are almost infinite in variety since they are merely accidental vehicles for the will of man, and real magicians know very well that the importance of such external aids is not only overrated but altogether fallacious. The sole purpose of the burning of perfumes, of imposing ceremonies and awe-inspiring procedures, is to aid in producing the two conditions which are indispensable for all magic phenomena: the magician must be excited till his condition is one resembling mental intoxication or becomes a genuine trance, and the passive subject must be made susceptible to the control of the superior mind. For it need not be added, that the latter will all the more readily be[Pg 50] affected, the feebler his will and the more imperfect his mental vision may be by nature or may have been rendered by training and careful preparation. Hence it is that the magic table of the dervish; the enchanted drum of the shaman; the medicine-bag of the Indian are all used for precisely the same purpose as the ring of Hecate; the divining rod and the magic wand of the enchanter. Legend and amulet, mummy and wax-figure, herb and stone, drug and elixir, incense and ointment, are all but the means, which the strong will of the gifted Master uses in order to influence and finally to control the weaker mind. Thus powerful perfumes, narcotic odors, and anæsthetic salves are employed to produce enervation and often actual and complete loss of self-control; in other cases the neophyte has to turn round and round within the magic circle, from east to west, till he becomes giddy and utterly exhausted. It is very curious to observe how, as far as these preparations go, in the most distant countries and among the most different forms of society the same means are employed for the same purpose: the whirling dance of the fanatic dervish is perfectly analogous to the wild raving of our Indian medicine-man, who ties himself with a rope to a post and then whirls around it in fierce fury. Thus, also, the oldest magicians speak with profound reverence of the powers of a little herb, known to botanists as *Hypericum perforatum L.*, and behold! in the year 1860 a German author of eminence, Justinus Kerner, still taught seriously, that the leaves[Pg 51] of that plant were the best means to banish evil spirits! Mandrake and elder have held their own in the false faith of nations from the oldest times to our day, and even now Germans as well as

slaves love to plant the latter everywhere in their graveyards, as suggestive of the realm of spirits!

White Magic, though strictly forbidden by the Church in all ages, seems nevertheless to have had irresistible attractions for wise and learned men of every country. This charm it owes to the many elements of truth which are mixed up with the final error; for it aims at a thorough understanding of the mysteries of Nature—and so far its purpose is legitimate and very tempting to superior minds—but only in order to obtain by such knowledge a power which Holy Writ expressly denies to man. When it prescribes the study of Nature as being the outer temple of God and represents all the parts of this vast edifice, from the central sun of the universe to the minutest living creation, as bound up by a common sympathy, no objection can be made to its doctrines, and even the greatest minds may fairly enroll themselves here as its pupils. But when it ascribes to this sympathy an active power and attributes to secret names of the Deity, to certain natural products, or to mechanically regulated combinations of the stars, a peculiar and supernatural effect, it sinks into contemptible superstition. Hence the constant aim of all White Magic, the successful summoning of superior spirits for the purpose of learning from them what is[Pg 52] purposely kept concealed from the mind of man, has never yet been reached. For it is sin, the same sin that craved to eat from the tree of knowledge. Hence, also, no beneficial end has ever yet been obtained by the practices of magic, although wise and learned men of every age have spent their lives and risked the salvation of their souls in restless efforts to lift the veil of Isis.

Black Magic, the Kishuph of the Hebrews, avows openly its purpose of forming a league with evil spirits in order to attain selfish ends, which are invariably fatal to others. And yet it is exactly here that we meet with great numbers of well-authenticated cases of success, which preclude all doubt and force us to admit the occasional efficiency of such sinful alliances. The art flourishes naturally best among the lowest races of mankind, where gross ignorance is allied with blind faith, and the absence of inspiration leaves the mind in natural darkness. We cannot help being struck here also with the fact that the means employed for such purposes have been the same in almost all ages. Readers of classic writers are familiar with the drum of Cybele—the Laplanders have from time immemorial had the same drum, on which heaven, hell, and earth are painted in bright colors, and reproduce in pictorial writing the letters of the modern spiritualist. A ring is placed upon the tightly stretched skin, which slight blows with a hammer cause to vibrate, and according to the apparently erratic motions of the ring over the varied[Pg 53] figures of gods, men, and beasts, the future is revealed. The consulting savage lies on his knees, and as the pendulum between our fingers and the pencil of Planchette in our hand write apparently at haphazard, but in reality under the pressure of our muscles acting through the unconscious influence of our will, so here also the beats of the hammer only seem to be fortuitous, but, in reality, are guided by the ecstatic owner. For already Olaf Magnus ("Hist. Goth." L. 3, ch. 26) tells us that the incessant beating of the drum, and the wild, exulting singing of the magician for hours before the actual ceremony begins, cause him to fall into a state of exaltation, without which he would be unable to see the future. That the drum is a mere accident in the ceremony was strikingly proved by a Laplander, who delivered up his instrument of witchcraft to the pious missionary (Tornaeus) by whom he had been converted, and who soon came to complain that even without his drum he could not help seeing hidden things—an assertion which he proved by reciting to the amazed minister all the minute details of his recent journey. Who can help, while reading of these savage magicians, recalling the familiar ring and drumstick in the left hand of

the Roman Isis—statues with a drum above the head, or the rarely missing ring and hammer in the hands of the Egyptian Isis? It need hardly be added that the Indians of our continent have practised the art with more or less success from[Pg 54] the day of discovery to our own times. Already Wafer in his "Descr. of the Isthmus of Darien" (1699) describes how Indian sorcerers, after careful preparation, were able to inform him of a number of future events, every one of which came to pass in the succeeding days. The prince of Neu-Wied again met a famous medicine-man among the Crea Indians, whose prophecies were readily accepted by the whites even, and of whose power he witnessed unmistakable evidence. Bonduel, a well-known and generally perfectly trustworthy writer, affirms, from personal knowledge, that among the Menomonees the medicine-men not only practise magic, but are able to produce most astounding results. After beating their drum, Bonduel used to hear a heavy fall and a faint, inarticulate voice, whereupon the tent of the charmer though fifteen feet high, rose in the air and inclined first on one and then on the other side. This was the time of the interview between the medicine-man and the evil spirit. Small doll-like figures of men also were used, barely two inches long, and tied to medicine-bags. They served mainly to inflame women with loving ardor, and when efficient could drive the poor creatures to pursue their beloved for days and nights through the wild forests. Other missionaries also affirm that these medicine-men must have been able to read the signs and perhaps to feel in advance the effects of the weather with amazing accuracy, since they frequently engaged to procure storms for special[Pg 55] purposes, and never failed. It is interesting to notice that according to the unanimous testimony of all writers on Indian affairs, these medicine-men almost invariably find a violent and wretched death.

It is not without interest to recall that the prevailing forms of the magic of our day, as far as they consist of table-moving, spirit-rapping, and the like, have their origin among the natives of our continent. The earliest notice of these strange performances appeared in the great journal of Augsburg, in Germany (*Allgemeine Zeitung*), where Andree mentioned their occurrence among Western Indians. Sargent gave us next a more detailed description of the manner in which many a wigwam or log-cabin in Iowa became the scene of startling revelations by means of a clumsy table which hopped merrily about, or a half-drunk, red-skinned medium, from whose lips fell uncouth words. (Spicer, "Lights and Sounds," p. 190.) It was only in 1847 that the famous Fox family brought these phenomena within the pale of civilization: having rented a house in Hydeville, N. Y., already ill-reputed on account of mysterious noises, they reduced these knockings to a kind of system, and, by means of an alphabet, obtained the important information that they were the work of a "spirit," and that his name was Charles Ray. Margaret Fox transplanted the rappings to Rochester; Catherine, only twelve years old, to Auburn, and from these two central places the new Magic spread rapidly throughout the Union. Opposition and persecutions[Pg 56] served, as they are apt to do, only to increase the interest of the public. A Mrs. Norman Culver proved, it is true, that rappings could easily be produced by certain muscular movements of the knee and the ankle, and a committee of investigation, of which Fenimore Cooper was a member, obtained ample evidence of such a method being used; but the faith of the believers was not shaken. The moving of tables, especially, furnished to their minds new evidence of the actual presence of spirits, and soon circles were established in nearly all the Northern and Western States, formed by persons of education without regard to confession, who called themselves Spiritualists or Spiritists, and their most favored associates Media. A number of men, whose intelligence and candor were alike unimpeachable, became members of the new sect, among them a judge, a governor of a State, and a professor of chemistry. They organized

societies and circles, they published journals and several works of interest and value, and produced results which more and more strengthened their convictions.

The new art met, naturally, with much opposition, especially among the ministers and members of the different churches. Some of the opponents laughed at the whole as a clever jugglery, which deserved its great success on account of the "smartness" of the performers; others denounced it as a heresy and a crime; the former, of course, saw in it nothing but the hand of man, while the latter admitted the agency of spirits,[Pg 57] but of spirits from below and not from above. An amusing feature connected with public opinion on this subject was, that when trade was prosperous and money abundant, spiritualism also flourished and found numerous adherents, but when business was slow, or a crisis took place, all minds turned away from the favorite pastime, and instinctively joined once more with the pious believers in the denunciation of the new magic. Thus a kind of antagonism has gradually arisen between orthodox Christians and enthusiastic spiritualists; the controversy is carried on with great energy on both sides, and, alas! to the eye of the general observer, magic is gaining ground every day, at least its adherents increase steadily in numbers, and even in social weight. (Tuttle, "Arena of Nature.") Not long ago the National Convention of Spiritualists, at their great meeting at Rochester, N.Y. (August, 1868), laid down nineteen fundamental principles of their new creed; their doctrines are based upon the fact that we are constantly surrounded by an invisible host of spirits, who desire to help us in returning once more to the father of all things, the Great Spirit.

Modern magic met with the same opposition in Europe. The French Academy, claiming, as usually, to be supreme authority in all matters of science, declined, nevertheless, to decide the question. Arago, who read the official report before the august body, closed with the words: "I do not believe a word of it!" but his colleagues remembered, perhaps, that their[Pg 58] predecessors had once or twice before committed themselves grievously. Had not the same Academy pronounced against the use of quinine and vaccination, against lightning-rods and steam-engines? Had not Réaumur suppressed Peyssonel's "Essay on Corals," because he thought it was madness to maintain their animal nature; had not his learned brethren decreed, in 1802, that there were no meteors, although a short time later two thousand fell in one department alone; and had they not, more recently still, received the news of ether being useful as an anæsthetic with scorn and unanimous condemnation? Perhaps they recalled Dr. Hare's assertion that our own Society for the Advancement of Useful Knowledge had, in 1855, refused to hear a report on Spiritualism, preferring to discuss the important question: "Why do roosters always crow between midnight and one o'clock?" At all events they heard the report and remained silent. In the same manner Alexander von Humboldt refused to examine the question. This indifference did not, however, check the growth of Spiritualism in France, but its followers divided into two parties: spiritualists, under Rivail, who called himself Allan Cardec, and spiritists, under Piérard. The former died in 1869, after having seen his *Livre des Esprits* reappear in fifteen editions; to seal his mission, he sent, immediately after his death, his spirit to inform his eager pupils, who crowded around the dead body of their leader, of his first impressions in the spirit world. If[Pg 59] the style is the man (*le style c'est l'homme*), no one could doubt that it was his spirit who spoke.

Perhaps the most estimable high-priest of this branch of modern magic is a well known professor of Geneva, Roessinger, a physician of great renown and much beloved by all who know him. He is, however, a rock of offense to American spiritualists, because he has ever remained firmly attached to his religious faith, and admits no spiritual revelations as genuine which do not

entirely harmonize with the doctrines of Christ and the statements of the Bible. Unfortunately this leads him to believe that his favorite medium, a young lady enjoying the mystic name of Libna, speaks under the direct inspiration of God himself! In England the new magic has not only numerous but also influential adherents, like Lord Lytton and the Darwinian Wallace; papers like the *Star* and journals like the *Cornhill Magazine*, support it with ability, and names like Home in former years and Newton in our day, who not only reveal secrets but actually heal the sick, have given a new prestige to the young science. The works of Howitt and Dr. Ashburner, of Mrs. Morgan and Mrs. Crossland have treated the subject under various aspects, and in the year 1871, Crookes, a well-known chemist, investigated the phenomena of Home's revelations by means of an apparatus specially devised for the purpose. The result was the conviction that if not spiritual, they were at least not produced by any power now known to science.—*Quart. Journ. of Science*, July, 1871.[Pg 60]

In Germany the new magic has been far less popular than elsewhere, but, in return, it has been there most thoroughly investigated. Men of great eminence in science and in philosophy have published extensive works on the subject, which are, however, more remarkable for zeal and industry than for acute judgment. Gerster in Regensburg claimed to have invented the Psychography, but Szapary in Paris and Cohnfeld in Berlin discovered at the same time the curious instrument known to us as Planchette. The most practical measure taken in Germany for the purpose of ascertaining the truth was probably the formation of a society for spirit studies, which met for the first time in Dresden in 1869, and purposes to obtain an insight into those laws of nature which are reported to make it possible to hold direct and constant intercourse with the world of spirits. Here, as in the whole tendency of this branch of magic, we see the workings not merely of idle curiosity but of that ardent longing after a knowledge of the future and a certainty of personal eternity, which dwells in the hearts of all men.

The phenomena of modern magic were first imperfect rappings against the wall, the legs of a table or a chair, accompanied by the motion of tables; then followed spirit-writing by the aid of a psychograph or a simple pencil, and finally came direct "spirit-writings," drawings by the media, together with musical and poetical inspirations, the whole reaching a climax in spirit-photographs. The ringing of bells, the danc[Pg 61]ing of detached hands in the air, the raising up of the entire body of a man, and musical performances without human aid were only accomplished in a few cases by specially favored individuals. Two facts alone are fully established in connection with all these phenomena: one, that some of the latter at least are not produced by the ordinary forces of nature; and the other, that the performers are generally, and the medium always, in a more or less complete state of trance. In this condition they forget themselves, give their mind up entirely into the hands of others—the media—and candidly believe they see and hear what they are told by the latter is taking place in their presence. Hence also the well-established fact that the spirits have never yet revealed a single secret, nor ever made known to us anything really new. Their style is invariably the same as that in which ecstatic and somnambulistic persons are apt to speak. A famous German spiritualist, Hornung, whose faith was well known, once laid his hands upon his planchette together with his wife, and then asked if there really was a world of spirits? To the utter astonishment of all present, the psychograph replied No! and when questioned again and again, became troublesome. The fact was simply that the would-be magician's wife did not believe in spirits, and as hers was the stronger will, the answer came from her mind and not from her husband's. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that media—most frequently delicate women of high[Pg 62] nervous sensibility,

and almost always leading lives of constant and wearying excitement—become on such occasions wrought up to a degree which resembles somnambulism and may really enable them, occasionally, in a state of clairvoyance, to see what is hidden to others. It is they who are "vitalized," as they call it, and not the knocking table, or the writing planchette, and hence arises the necessity of a medium for all such communications. That there are no spirits at work in these phenomena requires hardly to be stated; even the most ardent and enthusiastic adherents of the new magic cannot deny, that no original revelation concerning the world of spirits has yet been made, but that all that is told is but an echo of the more or less familiar views of men. It is far more interesting to notice, with Coleman, the electric and hygroscopic condition of the atmosphere, which has evidently much to do with such exhibitions. The visions of hands, arms, and heads, which move about in the air and may occasionally even be felt, are either mere hallucinations or real objective appearances, due to a peculiar condition of the air, and favorably interpreted by the predisposed mind. Hence, also, our own continent is, for its superior dryness of atmosphere, much more favorable to the development of such phenomena than that of Europe.

Spiritualists in the Old as in the New World are hopeful that the new magic will produce a new universal religion, and a better social order. In this di[Pg 63]rection, however, no substantial success has yet been obtained. Outsiders had expected that at least an intercourse with departed spirits might be secured, and thus the immortality of man might be practically demonstrated. But this also has not yet been done. What then can we learn from modern magic? Only this: that there are evidently forces in nature with whose character and precise intent we are not yet acquainted, and which yet deserve to be studied and carefully analyzed. Modern magic exhibits certain phenomena in man which are not subject to the known laws of nature, and thus proves that man possesses certain powers which he fails or does not know how to exert in ordinary life. Where these powers appear in consequence of special preparation or an exceptional condition of mind, they are comparatively worthless, because they are in such cases merely the result of physical or mental disease, and we can hope to profit only by powers employed by sound men. But where these powers become manifest by spontaneous action, apparently as the result of special endowment, they deserve careful study, and all the respect due to a new and unknown branch of knowledge.

Nor must it be overlooked, that, although modern magic as a science is new, most of the phenomena upon which it is based, were well known to the oldest nations. The Chinese, who seem to have possessed all the knowledge of mankind, ages before it could be useful to them, or to others, and to have lost it as soon as there was a[Pg 64] call for it, had, centuries ago, not only moving tables, but even writing spirits. Their modern planchette is a small board, which they let float upon the water, with the legs upward; they rest their hands upon the latter, and watch the gyrations it makes in the water. Or they hold a small basket with a camel's-hair brush attached to one end suspended over a table upon which they have strewn a layer of flour; the brush begins to move through the flour and to draw characters in it, which they interpret according to their alphabet. The priests of Buddha in Mongolia, also, have long since employed moving tables, and for a good purpose, usually to detect thieves. The lama, who is appealed to for the purpose, sits down before a small four-legged table, upon which he rests his hands, whilst reading a book of devotion. After perhaps half an hour, he rises, and as he does so, holding his hand steadily upon the table, the table also rises and follows his hand, which he raises till hand and table are both level with his eyes. Then the priest advances, the table precedes him, and soon begins to move at

such a rate that it seems to fly through the air, and the lama can hardly follow. Sometimes it falls down upon the very spot where the stolen goods are hidden; at other times it only indicates the direction in which they are to be sought for; and not unfrequently it refuses altogether to move, in which event the priest abandons the case as hopeless. (*Nord. Biene*, April 27, 1853.) Here also it is evident that the table is not the controlling agent, but the will of the lama, whom[Pg 65] it obeys by one of those mysterious powers which we call magic. It is the same force which acts in the divining rod, the pendulum, and similar phenomena.

The name of Medium is an American invention, and is based upon the assumption that only a few favored persons are able to enter into direct communication with spirits, who may then convey the revelations they receive to others. They are generally children and young persons, but among grown men also certain constitutions seem to be better adapted to such purposes than others. In almost all cases it has been observed, that the electric condition of the medium is a feature of greatest importance; the more electricity he possesses, the better is he able to produce magic phenomena, and when his supply is exhausted by a long session, his power also ceases. Hence, perhaps, the peculiar qualification of children; while, on the other hand, the fact that they not unfrequently are able to answer questions, in languages, of which they are ignorant, proves that they also do not themselves give the reply, but only receive it from the questioner, and state it as it exists in the mind of the latter. Hence, also, the utter absurdity of so-called spirit paintings, and, still worse, of poetical effusions like Mr. Harris' "Lyric of the Golden Age," in eleven thousand four hundred and thirty wretched verses. For what the "circle" does not know individually or collectively, the medium also is not able to produce. This truth is made still more evident by the latest phenomena developed in spiritualistic circles, the so-called trance[Pg 66] speaking, which may be heard occasionally in New York circles, and which requires no interposition of a medium. For here, also, we are struck by the utter absence of usefulness in all these revelations; the inspired believers speak, they recite poetry, but it remains literally *vox et præterea nihil*, and we are forcibly reminded of the words of Æschylus, who already said in his "Agamemnon" (v. 1127),

"Did ever seers afford delight?The long practised art of all the seers whomEver the gods inspired, revealedNaught but horrors and a wretched fate."

Among the media of our day, Home is naturally *facile princeps*. A Scotchman by birth, he claims that his mother already possessed the gift of Second Sight, and that in their home near Edinburgh similar endowments were frequent among their neighbors. At the age of three years he saw the death of a cousin, who lived in a distant town, and named the persons who were standing around her couch; he conversed constantly in his childish way with spirits and heard heavenly music; his cradle was rocked by invisible hands, and his toys came unaided into his hands. When ten years old he was taken to an aunt in America, in whose house he had no sooner been installed than chairs and tables, beds and utensils, began to move about in wild disorder, till the terrified lady sent the unlucky boy away. Attending once an exhibition of table-moving he fell into fits and suddenly became cataleptic; during[Pg 67] the paroxysm he heard a summoning, then the spirits announced the wrecking of two sailors, the table began to rock as in a storm, the whistling of the wind through the tackle, the creaking of the vessel, and the dull, heavy thud of the waves against her bows, all were distinctly heard, and finally the table was upset, while the spirits announced the name and the age of the perishing seamen. From that day Home carefully cultivated his strange gifts, and developed what he considered a decided talent for reading the

future. As a young man he returned to Europe and soon became famous. Florence was, for a time, the principal stage of his successes; here he not only summoned the spirits of the departed, but was raised by invisible powers from the ground and hovered for some time above the heads of his visitors. The superstitious Italians finally became excited and threatened him with death, from which a Count Branichi saved him at great personal peril. In Naples the spirits suddenly declared their intention to leave him on February 10, 1856, and to remain absent for a whole year; they did so, and during the interval Home enjoyed better health than ever in his life! In Rome he became a Catholic, and good Pio Nono himself offered him his crucifix to kiss, with the words: "That is the only true magic wand!"—unfortunately this was not Home's view always; at least we find him in 1864 in the same city in conflict with the papal police, who ordered him to cease all intercourse "with higher as well as with lower spirits," and finally compelled him to[Pg 68] leave the Eternal City. He then claimed publicly, what, it must not be forgotten, he had consistently maintained from the beginning of his marvelous career, that he was the unwilling agent of higher powers, which affected him at irregular times, independent of his will, and often contrary to his dearest wishes. It must be added that he gave the strongest proof of his sincerity by never accepting from the public pecuniary compensation for the exhibition of peculiar powers.

His exterior is winning; he is of medium height, light-haired and light-complexioned, of slender figure; simple and well-bred in his manners, and of irreproachable morale. The highest circles of society have always been open to him, and his marriage with a daughter of the Russian general Stroll has given him wealth and an agreeable position in the world. As the spirits had predicted, they returned on the 10th of February, 1857, and announced themselves by repeated gentle knockings—in other words, Home's former nervous disease returned, and with it his exceptionable powers. He was then in Paris, and soon excited the attention of the fair but superstitious Empress, whose favor he speedily obtained by a revelation concerning the "Empereur de l'avenir," as the spirits had the gallantry to call her infant son. Napoleon also began to take an interest in the clever, talented man, whose special gifts did not prevent him from being a pliant courtier and a cunning observer. He showed himself grateful for the kindness with which Eugenie provided for his sister's[Pg 69] education by exerting his powers to the utmost at the Tuileries, and by revealing to the Emperor the secrets he had skillfully elicited during his spiritual sessions, from statesmen and generals. At the house of Prince Murat he performed, perhaps, the most surprising feats he has ever accomplished: seated quietly in his arm-chair, he caused tables to whirl around, the clocks in two rooms to stand still or to go at will, all the bells in the house to ring together or separately, and handkerchiefs to escape irresistibly from the hands and the pockets of several persons, the Emperor included. Then the floor seemed to sink, all the doors of the house were slammed to and opened again, the gaslights became extinct, and when they as suddenly blazed up again, Home had disappeared without saying good-bye. The guests left the house quietly and in a state of great and painful excitement. At another exhibition in Prince Napoleon's house, a renowned juggler was present by invitation to watch Home, but he declared, soon, that there was no jugglery, such as he knew, in what he saw, and the meeting, during which the most startling phenomena were exhibited, ended by Home's falling into a state of fearful catalepsy. Perhaps nothing can speak more clearly of the deep interest felt in the modern magician by the highest in the land, than the fact that more than once private sessions were held at the Tuileries, at which, besides himself, the Emperor and the Empress, only one person was allowed to be present, the Duke of Monte[Pg 70]bello. It is said, though not by Home himself, that at one of these meetings the sad fate of the Empire was clearly predicted, and even

the time of the Emperor's death ascertained. One achievement of modern magic in which Home is unique, is the raising of his body into the air; no other person having as yet even attempted the same exploit. He is lifted up in a horizontal position, sometimes only to a short distance from the floor, but not unfrequently, also, nearly to the ceiling; on one occasion, in Bordeaux, he remained thus suspended in the sight of several persons for five minutes. Another speciality of his, is the lengthening of his body. According to a statement deserving full credit ("Human Nature," Dec. 1868), he can, when in a state of trance, add four inches to his stature! Finally, he has been repeatedly seen passing in the air out of one window of the room in which his visitors were assembled, and returning through another window, an exhibition which almost always ended in the complete exhaustion and apparent illness of the magician.

Home himself maintains that he performs no miracles, and is not able to cause the laws of nature to be suspended for a moment, but that he is gifted with an exceptional power to employ faculties which he possesses in common with all his brethren. In him they are active; in the vast majority of men they lie dormant, because man is no longer conscious of the full and absolute control over Nature, with which he has[Pg 71] been endowed by the Creator. He adds that it is faith alone, without the aid of spirits, which enables him to cause mysterious lights to be seen, or heavy pieces of furniture to move about in the air, and to produce strange sounds and peculiar visions in the mind of his friends. On the other hand, when he is lifted up into the air, or enabled to read the future, and to reveal what absent persons are doing at the moment, he professes to act as a willingless instrument of spirits, having neither the power to provoke his ability to perform these feats, nor to lay it aside at will. Occasionally he professes to be conscious of an electric current, which he is able to produce at certain times and in a certain state of mind; this emanation protects his body against influences fatal to others, and enables him, for instance, to hold live coals in his hand, and to thrust his whole head into the chimney fire. This "certain state of mind," as he calls it, is simply a state of trance. Hence the extremely variable nature of his performances, and his great reluctance to appear as a magician at the request of others. Nor is he himself always quite sure of his own condition; thus, in the winter of 1870, when he wished to exhibit some of the simplest phenomena in the presence of a number of savants in St. Petersburg, he failed so completely in every effort, that the committee reported him virtually, though not in terms, an impostor. The same happened to him at a first examination held by Mr. Crookes, a well-known professor of chemistry, in company with Messrs. Cox and[Pg 72] Huggins; they did not abandon their purpose, however, and at the next meeting, when certain antipathic spectators were no longer present, Home displayed the most remarkable phenomena. The committee came to the conclusion that he was enabled to perform these feats by means of a new "psychic force," which it was all-important for men of science to investigate thoroughly.

The number of men and women who possess similar endowments, though generally in an inferior degree only, is very great, especially in the United States. Only one feature is common to them all—the state of trance in which they are enabled to produce such startling phenomena—in all other respects they differ widely, both as to the nature of their performances and as to their credibility. For, from the first appearance of media in spiritualistic circles, in fact, probably already in the exhibitions of the Fox family, delusion and willful deception have been mixed up with actual magic. Tables have been moved by clever legerdemain; spirit rappings have been produced by cunning efforts of muscles and sinews; ventriloquists have used their art to cause extraordinary noises in the air, and Pepper's famous ghosts have shown the facility with which the eye may be deceived and the other senses be taken captive. The most successful deception

was practised by the so-called Davenport Brothers, whose well-known exhibitions excited universal interest, as long as the impression lasted that they were the work[Pg 73] of invisible spirits, while they became even more popular and attractive when their true nature had been discovered, on account of the exquisite skill with which these juggling tricks were performed.

The masters of physical science have amply proved that table-moving is a simple mechanical art. Faraday and Babinet already called attention to the fact that the smallest muscles of the human body can produce great effects, when judiciously employed, and cited, among other instances, the so-called Electric Girl, exhibited in Paris, who hurled a chair on which she had been sitting, by muscular power alone, to a great distance. The same feat, it is well-known, has been repeatedly accomplished by other persons also. Like muscular efforts are made—no doubt often quite unconsciously—by persons whose will acts energetically, and when several men co-operate the force of vibrations produced in a kind of rhythmical tact, becomes truly astounding. We need only remember, that the rolling of a heavily laden cart in the streets may shake a vast, well-built edifice from roof to cellar, and that the regular tramp of a detachment of men has more than once caused suspension bridges, of great and well-tried strength, to break and to bury hundreds of men under their ruins. Thus a few children and delicate women alone can, by an hour's steady work and undivided attention, move tables of such weight that a number of strong men can lift them only with difficulty. The only really new force which has ever appeared in this[Pg 74] branch of modern magic is the Od of Baron Reichenbach; its presence and efficacy cannot be denied, although the manner in which it operates is still a mystery. In the summer of 1861 the German baron found himself in a company of table-movers at the house of Lord William Cowper, the son-in-law of Lord Palmerston. To prove his faith he crept under the heavy dining-table, resting with his full weight on one of the three solid feet and grasping the other two firmly with his hands. The wood began to emit low, electric sounds, then came louder noises as when furniture cracks in extremely dry weather, and finally the table began to move. Reichenbach did his best to prevent the movement, but the table rushed down the room, dragging the unlucky baron with it, to the intense amusement of all the persons present. The German savant maintains that this power, possessed only by the privileged few who are peculiarly sensitive, emanates from the tips of the fingers, becomes luminous in the dark, and acts like a lever upon all obstacles that come in its way. As the existence of Od is established beyond all doubt, and its effects are admitted by all who have studied the subject, we are forced to look upon it as at least one of the mysterious elements of modern magic.

The Od is, as far as we know, a magnetic force; for as soon as certain persons are magnetized they become conscious of peculiar sensations, heat or cold, headache or other pains, and, if predisposed, of a startling increase[Pg 75] of power in all their senses. They see lights of every kind, can distinguish even minute objects in a dark room, and behold beautiful white flames upon the poles of magnets. Reichenbach obtained, as he believed, two remarkable results from these first phenomena. He concluded that polar lights, aurora boreales, etc., were identical with the magnetic light of the earth, and he discovered that sensitive, sickly persons, who were peculiarly susceptible to magnetic influences, ought to lie with the head to the north, and the feet to the south in order to obtain refreshing sleep. The next step was an effort to identify the Od with animal magnetism; Reichenbach found that cataleptic patients who perceived the presence of magnets with exquisite accuracy, and followed them like mesmerized persons, were affected alike by his own hands or those of other perfectly sound, but strongly magnetic men. He could attract such unfortunate persons by his outstretched fingers, and force them to follow him in a

state of unconsciousness wherever he led them. According to his theory, the two sides of man are of opposite electric nature and a magnetic current passes continually from one side to the other; sensitive persons though blind-folded, know perfectly well on which side they approach others.

Gradually Baron Reichenbach extended the range of his experiments, employing for that purpose, besides his own daughter, especially a Miss Nowotny, a sad sufferer from cataleptic attacks. She was able to distinguish, by the sensations which were excited in her whole sys[Pg 76]tem, more than six hundred chemicals, and arranged them, under his guidance, according to their electro-chemical force. Another sick woman, Miss Maiss, felt a cool wind whenever certain substances were brought near her, and by these and similar efforts in which the baron was aided by many friends, he ascertained the fact, that there is in nature a force which passes through all substances, the human body included, and is inherent in the whole material world. This force he calls the Od. Like electricity and magnetism, this Od is a polar force, and here also opposite poles attract, like poles repel each other. The whole subject, although as yet only in its infancy, is well deserving of careful study and thorough investigation.

The manifestations of so-called spirits have naturally excited much attention, and given rise to the bitterest attacks. In England, especially, the learned world is all on one side and the Spiritualists all on the other; nor do they hesitate to say very bitter things of each other. The *Saturday Review*, more forcibly than courteously, speaks of American spiritualists thus: "If this is the spirit world, and if this is spiritual intelligence, and if all the spirits can do, is to whisk about in dark rooms, and pinch people's legs under the table, and play 'Home, Sweet Home,' on the accordeon, and kiss folks in the dark, and paint baby pictures, and write such sentimental, namby-pamby as Mr. Coleman copies out from their dictation—it is much better to be a respectable pig and accept annihilation than to be cursed with such an im[Pg 77]mortality as this." To which the *Spiritual Magazine* (Jan., 1862), does not hesitate to reply. "We shall not eat breakfast bacon for some time, for fear of getting a slice of the editor of the *Saturday Review*, in his self-sought appropriate metempsychosis." It must be borne in mind, however, that spiritualists everywhere appeal to their own reason as the highest tribunal before which such questions can be decided, and to the laws of nature, because as they say, they are identical with the laws of practical reason. They believe, as a body, neither in angels nor in demons. Their spirits are simply the purified souls of departed men. Protestant theologians, who admit of no purgatory, see in these exhibitions nothing but the deeds of Satan. Catholic divines, on the other hand, and Protestant mystics, who, like the German, Schubert, believe that there exist what they curiously enough call a "more peaceful infernal spirit," ascribe them to the agency of evil spirits. In the great majority of cases, however, the spirits have clearly shown themselves nothing else but the product of the media. The latter, invariably either of diseased mind by nature or over-excited for the occasion, believe they see and hear manifestations in the outer world, which in reality exist only in their own consciousness. A Catholic medium is thus visited by spirits from heaven and hell, while the Protestant medium never meets souls from purgatory. Nothing has ever been revealed concerning the future state of man, that was not al[Pg 78]ready well known upon earth. Most diverting are the jealousies of great spirits, of Solomon and Socrates, Moses and Plato—when the media happen to be jealous of each other! A somewhat satirical writer on the subject explains even the fact that spirits so often contradict each other and say vile things of sacred subjects, by the inner wickedness of the media, which comes to light on such occasions, while they carefully conceal it in ordinary life! If these spirits are really the creations of the inner

magic life, of which we are just learning to know the first elementary signs, then the powers which are hidden within us may well terrify us as they appear in such exhibitions, while we will not be surprised at the manner in which many an ordinary mortal appears here as a poet or a prophet—if not as a wicked demon. Nor must it be overlooked that our memory holds vast treasures of knowledge of which we are utterly unconscious until, under certain circumstances, one or the other fact suddenly reappears before our mind's eye. The very fact that we can, by a great effort and continued appeals to our memory, recall at last what was apparently utterly forgotten, proves the presence of such knowledge. A state of intense excitement, of fever or of trance, is peculiarly favorable to the recovery of such hidden treasures, and there can be no doubt that many a medium honestly believes to receive a new revelation, when only old, long forgotten facts return to his consciousness. Generally however, we repeat, nothing is in the spirit that[Pg 79] is not in the medium. The American spiritualist conjures up only his own countrymen, and occasionally some world-renowned heroes like Napoleon or Cæsar, Shakespeare or Schiller, while the cosmopolitan German receives visits from men of all countries. Finally it must be borne in mind that, according to an old proverb, we are ever ready to believe what we wish to see or hear, and hence the amazing credulity of the majority of spiritualists. Even skeptics are not free from the influence of this tendency. When Dr. Bell, the eminent physician of Somerville, Mass., investigated these phenomena of modern magic, many years ago, he promptly noticed that the spirits never gave information which was not already in the possession of one or the other person present. Only in a few cases he acknowledged with his usual candor, and at once, at the meeting itself, that a true answer was returned. But when he examined, after his return home, these few exceptional revelations, he discovered that he had been mistaken, and that these answers had been after all as illusory as the others.

There can be no doubt therefore, that modern magic, as far as it consists in table-moving and spirit-rapping, with their usual accompaniments, is neither the work of mechanical jugglery exclusively, nor, on the other hand, the result of revelations made by spirits. In the mass of accumulated evidence there remain however, after sifting it carefully, many facts which cannot be explained according to the ordinary course of nature.[Pg 80] The power which produces these phenomena must be classified with other well-known powers given to man under exceptional circumstances, such as the safety of somnambulists in dangerous places; the cures performed by faith, and the strange exhibitions made by diseased persons, suffering of catalepsy and similar affections. If men, under the influence of mesmerism, in a state of ecstatic fervor, or under the pressure of strong and long-continued excitement, show powers which are not possessed by man naturally, then modern magic also may well be admitted as one of the means by which such extraordinary, and as yet unexplored forces are brought to light. All that can be reasonably asked of those who so peremptorily challenge our admiration, and demand our respect for the new science, is that it shall be proved to be useful to man, and this proof is, as yet, altogether wanting.

In Mexico the preparation for acts of magic seems to have been downright intoxication; at least we learn from Acosta, in his *Hist. nat. y moral de los Indias* (lv.), that the priests, before sacrificing, inhaled powerful perfumes, rubbed themselves with ointments made of venomous animals, tobacco and hempseed, and finally drank chica mixed with various drugs. Thus they reached a state of exaltation in which they not only butchered numbers of human beings in cold blood, and lost all fear of wild beasts, but were also able to reveal what was happening at a great distance, or even future events. We find similar practices, also,[Pg 81] nearer home. The Indians

of Martha's Vineyard had, before they were converted, their skillful magicians, who stood in league with evil spirits, and as pawaws discovered stolen things, injured men at a distance, and clearly foretold the coming of the whites. The pious Brainert gives us full accounts of some of the converted Delawares, who, after baptism, felt the evil spirit depart from them, and lost the power of magic. One, a great and wicked magician, deplored bitterly his former condition, when he was a slave of the evil one, and became, in the good missionary's words: "an humble, devout, hearty, and loving Christian." It is more difficult to explain the magic of the so-called Archbishop Beissel, the head of the brotherhood at Ephrata, in Pennsylvania, who, according to contemporary authorities "oppressed by his magic the father and steward of the convent, Eckerling, to such a degree, that he left his brethren and sought refuge in a hermit's hut in the forest! The spirits of departed brethren and sisters returned to the refectory at this bishop's bidding; they partook of bread and meat, and even conversed with their successors. There can be no doubt that Beissel, abundantly and exceptionally gifted, possessed the power to put his unhappy subordinates, already exhausted by asceticism of every kind, into a state of ecstasy, in which they sincerely believed they saw these spirits, and were subjected to magic influences. That such power has by no means entirely departed from our continent, may be seen in the atrocities[Pg 82] perpetrated at the command of the negroes' Obee, of which well-authenticated records abound in Florida and Louisiana, as well as in Cuba.

The Indo-Germanic race has known and practised black magic from time immemorial, and the Vendidad already explains it as an act which Ahriman, the Evil Spirit, brought forth when overshadowed by death. In Egypt it flourished for ages, and has never become entirely extinct. Jannes and Jambres, who led the priests in their opposition to Moses (2. Tim. iii. 8), have their successors in our day, and the very miracles performed by these ancient charmers have been witnessed again and again by modern travelers. Holy Writ abounds with instances of every kind of magic; it speaks of astrology, and prophesying from arrows, from the entrails of animals, and from dreams; but, strangely enough, the charming of serpents and the evil eye are not mentioned, if we except Balaam. The Kabbalah, on the contrary, speaks more than once of the evil eye (ain hara), and all the southern nations of Europe, as well as the Slavic races, fear its weird power.

The eye is, however, by no means employed only to work evil; by the side of their *mal occhio* the Italians have another gift, called *attrativa*, which enables man, apparently by the force of his eye only, to draw to himself all whom he wishes to attract. The well-known Saint Filippo Neri thus not only won all whom he wished to gain over, by looking at them, but even dogs left their beloved masters and followed him everywhere.[Pg 83] Cotton Mather tells us in his "Magnolia" that quakers frequently by the eye only—though often, also, by anointing or breathing upon them—compelled others to accompany them, to join their communion, and to be in all things obedient to their bidding. Tom Case, himself a quaker, certainly possessed the power of overwhelming those at whom he looked fixedly for a while, to such a degree that they fell down as if struck with epilepsy; once, at least, he turned even a mad bull, by the force of his eye, till it approached him humbly and licked his hand like a pet dog. Even in our own age Goethe has admitted the power of certain men to attract others by the strength of their will, and mentions an instance in which he himself, ardently wishing to see his beloved one, forced her unconsciously to come and meet him halfway. (Eckermann, iii. 201.)

It avails nothing to stigmatize a faith so deeply rooted and so universal as mere superstition. Among the mass of errors which in the course of ages have accumulated around the creed, the

little grain of truth, the indubitable power of man's mind to act through the eye, ought not to be overlooked.

It is the same with the magic known as such to the two great nations of antiquity. If the Greeks saw in Plato the son of Apollo, who came to his mother Perictione in the shape of a serpent, and in Alexander the Great the son of Jupiter Ammon, they probably intended merely to pay the same compliment to their countrymen which modern nations convey by calling[Pg 84] their rulers Kings and Kaisers "by the Grace of God." But the consistency with which higher beings came to visit earth-born man in the shape of favored animals, is more than an accident. The sons of God came to see the daughters of men, though it is not said in what form they appeared, and the suggestion that they were the "giants upon the earth," mentioned in Holy Writ, is not supported; but exactly as the gods came from Olympus in the shape of bulls and rams, so the evil spirits of the Middle Ages appeared in the shape of rams and cats. A curious instance of the mixture of truth and falsehood appears in this connection. It is well-known that the Italians of the South look upon Virgil as one of the greatest magicians that ever lived, and ascribe to his tomb even now supernatural power. The poet himself had, of course, nothing whatever to do with magic; but his reputation as a magician arose from the fact that, next to the Bible, his verses became, at an early period, a favorite means of consulting the future. *Sortes Virgilianæ*, the lines which upon accidentally opening the volume first met the eye, were a leading feature of the art known as stichomania.

The story of the greatest magician mentioned in the New Testament has been thoroughly examined, and the main features, at least, are well established. Simon Magus was a magician in the sense in which the ancients used that term; but he possessed evidently, in addition, all the powers claimed by better spiritualists, like Home in our day. A native of Gitton, a small[Pg 85] village of Samaria, he had early manifested superior intellectual gifts, accompanied by an almost marvelous control over the minds of others. By the aid of the former he produced a lofty gnostic system, which crumbled, however, to pieces as soon as it came into contact with the inspired system of Christianity. His influence over others led him, in the arrogance which is inherent to natural man, to consider himself as the Great Divine Power, which appeared in different forms as Father, Son, and Spirit. He professed to be able to make himself invisible and to pass, unimpeded, through solid substances—precisely as was done in later ages by Saint Dominic and other saints (Goerres. Mystic, ii. 576)—to bind and to loosen others as well as himself at will; to open prison doors and to cause trees to grow out of the bare ground. Before utterly rejecting his pretensions as mere lies and tricks, we must bear in mind two facts: first, that modern jugglers in India perform these very tricks in a manner as yet unexplained, and secondly, that he, in all probability, possessed merely the power of exciting others to a high state of exaltation, in which they candidly believed they saw all these things. At all events, his magic deeds were identical with the miracles of later saints, and as these are enthroned in shrine and statue in Rome, so the Eternal City erected to Simon Magus, also, a statue, and proclaimed him a god in the days of Claudius! Another celebrated magician of the same race, was Sedechias (Goerres. Mystic, iv. ii. 71), who lived in the days of[Pg 86] Saint Louis, and who, once, in order to convince the skeptics of his day of the real existence of spirits, such as the Kabbalah admits, ordered them to appear in human form before the eyes of the monarch. Instantly the whole plain around the king's tent was alive with a vast army; long rows of bright-colored tents dotted the lowlands, and on the slopes around were encamped countless troops; whilst mounted squadrons appeared in the air,

performing marvelous evolutions. This was probably the first instance of those airy hosts, which have ever since been seen in various countries.

The Christian era gave to magic phenomena a new and specific character; what was a miracle in apostolic times remained in the eyes of the multitude a miracle to our day, when performed by saints of the church—it became a crime and an abomination when the authors were laymen, and yet both differed in no single feature. The most remarkable representative of this dual nature of supernatural performances is, no doubt, Dr. Faust, whom the great and pious Melanchthon states to have well known as a native of the little village of Knittlingen, near his own birth-place, and as a man of dissolute habits, whom the Devil carried off in person. His motto, which has been discovered under a portrait of his (Hauber's "Bibl. Mag."), was characteristic of his faith: *Omne bonum et perfectum a Deo, imperfectum a diabolo*. His vast learning, his great power over the elements, and the popular story of his pact with the Evil One, made him a hero among the Ger[Pg 87]mans, of whose national tendencies he was then the typical representative. Unfortunately, however, nearly every Christian land has had its own Faust; such was, for instance, in Spain the famous Dr. Toralba, who lived in the sixteenth century, and by the aid of a servile demon read the future, healed the sick, traveled through the air, and even when he fell into the hands of the Inquisition, obtained his release through the Great Admiral of Castile. Gilles de Laval, who was publicly burnt in 1440, and Lady Fowlis, of Scotland, are parallel cases.

One of the most absurd ceremonies belonging to black magic, was the well-known Taigheirm, of the Scotch Highlands, a demoniac sacrifice evidently handed down from pagan times. The so-called magician procured a large number of black cats, and devoted them, with solemn incantations, and while burning offensive incense of various kinds, to the evil spirits. Then the poor victims were spitted and slowly roasted over a fire of coals, one after the other, but so that not a second's pause occurred between the death of one and the sufferings of the next. This horridly absurd sacrifice had to be continued for three days and nights, during which the magician was not allowed to take any food or drink. The consequence was, that if he did not drop down exhausted and perish miserably, he became fearfully excited, and finally saw demons in the shape of black cats who granted him all he desired (Horst. "Deuteroscopia," ii. 184). It need hardly be[Pg 88] added that in the state of clairvoyance which he had reached, he only asked for what he well knew was going to happen, and that all the fearful visions of hellish spirits existed only in his overwrought imagination. But it will surprise many to learn that such "taigheirms" were held as late as the last century, and that a place is still shown on the island of Mull, where Allan Maclean with his assistant, Lachlain Maclean, sacrificed black cats for four days and nights in succession. The elder of the two passed for a kind of high-priest and chief magician with the superstitious islanders; the other was a young unmarried man of fine appearance, and more than ordinary intelligence. Both survived the fearful ceremony, but sank utterly exhausted to the ground, unable to obtain the revelation which they had expected; nevertheless they retained the gift of second sight for their lives.

It must not be imagined, finally, that the summoning of spirits is a lost art; even in our day men are found who are willing to call the departed from their resting-place, and to exhibit them to the eyes of living men. The best explanation of this branch of magic was once given by a learned professor, whom the Prince Elector of Brandenburg, Frederick II., sent for from Halle, in order to learn from him how spirits could be summoned. The savant declared that nothing was easier, and supported his assertion by a number of actual performances. First the spectator was prepared by strong beverages, such as the Egyptian sorcerers[Pg 89] already used to employ on similar

occasions, and by the burning of incense. Soon he fell into a kind of half-sleep, in which he could still understand what was said, but no longer reflect upon the sense of the words; gradually his brain became so disturbed, and his imagination so highly excited, that he pictured to himself images corresponding to the words which he heard, and called them up before his mind's eye as realities. The magician, protected against the effects of the incense by a sponge filled with an alcoholic mixture, then began to converse with his visitor, and tried to learn from him all he could concerning the person the latter wished to see, his shape, his clothes, etc. Finally the victim was conducted into a dark room, where he was suddenly asked by a stern, imperious voice: "Do you not see that woman in white?" (or whatever the person might be,) and at once his over-excited imagination led him to think that he really beheld what he expected or wished to see. This was allowed to go on till he sank down exhausted, or actually fainted away. When he recovered his consciousness, he naturally recollected but imperfectly what he had seen while in a state of great excitement, and his memory, impaired by the intermediate utter exhaustion and fainting, failed to recall the small errors or minute inaccuracies of his vision. All that was left of the whole proceeding was a terrifying impression on his mind that he had really seen the spirits of departed friends.

Such skillful manœuvres were more than once em[Pg 90]ployed for sinister purposes. Thus it is a well-known historical fact that the men who obtained control over King Frederick William II., after his ascension to the throne, and held it for a time by the visions which they showed him, employed means like these to summon the spirits he wished to see. The master in this branch of black magic was undoubtedly Joseph Balsamo, the Count Cagliostro of French history. He was neither a magician in the true sense of the word, nor even a religious enthusiast, but merely an accomplished juggler and swindler, who had acquired, by natural endowment, patient study, and consummate art, a great power over the minds of others. He played upon the imagination of men as upon a familiar instrument, and the greatest philosophers were as easily victimized by him as the most clear-sighted women, in spite of the natural instinct which generally protects the latter against such imposition. His secret—as far as the summoning of the spirits of the departed is concerned—has died with him, but that enlightened, conscientious men candidly believed they had been shown disembodied spirits, is too well established by memories of French and Dutch writers to be doubted. In the meetings of his "lodges of Egyptian Freemasons" he, as Grand Cophtha, or those whom he had qualified by breathing upon them, employed a boy or a girl, frequently called up at haphazard from the street, but at other times carefully prepared for the purpose, to look into the hand or a basin of water.[Pg 91] The poor child was, however, first made half-unconscious, being anointed with the "oil of wisdom," no doubt an intoxicating compound, and after numerous ceremonies, carried into a recess called the Tabernacle, and ordered to look into the hand or a basin of water. After the assembly had prayed for some time, the "Dove," as they called the child, was asked what he saw. Ordinarily he beheld first an angel or a priest—probably the image of Cagliostro himself in his sacerdotal robes—but frequently also monkeys, the offspring of a skeptical imagination. Then followed more or less interesting revelations, some utterly absurd, others of real interest, and at times actual predictions of future events. Cagliostro himself, during his last trial before the Inquisition of Rome, while readily confessing a large number of impostures, stoutly maintained the genuineness of these communications and insisted that they were the effects of a special power granted by God. His assertion has some value, as the shrewd man knew very well how much more he was likely to gain by a prompt avowal than by such a denial; his wife, also, although his accomplice in former years, and now by no means disposed to spare her quasi-husband, always stated that this was a true mystery

which she had never been able to fathom. If we add to these considerations the fact that numerous masters of lodges, even in Holland and England, obtained the same results, and that they cannot all have been impostors or deluded victims, there remains enough in these[Pg 92] well-established phenomena to ascribe them to a mysterious, magic power. (*Compendio della vita, etc. di G. Balsamo*, Roma, 1791.) It is in fact quite evident that the unfortunate juggler possessed in a very rare degree a power akin to that practised by a Mesmer, a Home, and other men of that class, without having the sense to understand its true nature or the ambition to employ it for other than the lowest selfish purposes. Trials of magicians, who have conjured up the dead and compelled them to reveal the future, are still taking place every now and then; in the year 1850 not less than four men, together with their associates, were accused of this crime in enlightened Germany, and the proceedings in one case, which occurred in Munich, created no small sensation.

Black magic, therefore, must also be looked upon as by no means a mere illusion, much less as the work of evil spirits. The results it obtains at times are the work of man himself, and exist only within his own conscience. But if man can produce such marvelous effects, which lie apparently beyond the range of the material world, how much more must the Creator and Preserver of all things be able to call forth events which transcend—to our mind—the limits of the tangible world. Such occurrences, when they have a higher moral or religious purpose in view, we call Miracles, and they remain incomprehensible for all whose knowledge is confined to the physical world. Above the laws of nature there rules the Divine Will, which[Pg 93] can do what Nature cannot do, and which we can only begin to understand when we bear in mind the fact that by the side of the visible order of the world or above it, there exist spiritual laws as well as spiritual beings. In a miracle, powers are rendered active which ordinarily remain inactive, but which exist none the less permanently in the world. Hence all great thinkers have readily admitted the existence of miracles: a Locke and a Leibnitz as well as, more recently, a Stahl and a Schopenhauer. Locke, in his "Discourse of Miracles," goes so far as to call them the very credentials of a messenger sent from God, and asserts that Moses and Christ have alike authenticated the truth and the divine character of their revelations by miracles. Even their possible continuance is believed in by those who hope that men will ever continue among us who "have tasted the good word of God and *the powers of the world to come*." (Hebrews vi. 5.)[Pg 94]

III.

DREAMS.

"To sleep—perchance to dream."—HAMLET.

Of the two parts of our being, one, spiritual and heaven-born, is always active, the other, the bodily, earth-born part, requires frequent and regular rest in sleep. During this time of repose, however, the mind also ceases apparently its operations, merely, however, because it has no longer servants at its command, who are willing and able to give expression to its activity. When

the senses are asleep the mind is deprived of the usual means of communication with the outer world; but this does not necessarily condemn it to inaction. On the contrary, it has often been maintained that the mind is most active and capable of the highest achievements when released from its usual bondage to the senses. Already Æschylus in his "Eumenides" says:

The mind of sleepers acts more cunningly;The glare of day conceals the fate of men.

It seems, however, as if the intermediate state between the full activity of wakeful life and the complete repose of the senses in sound sleep, is most favorable to the development of such magic phenomena as occur in[Pg 95] dreams. The fact that the susceptibility of the mind is at that time peculiarly great is intimately connected with the statement recorded in Holy Writ, that God frequently revealed His will to men in dreams. If we admit the antiquity of the book of Job, we see there the earliest known announcement of this connection. "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction" (xxxiii. 15). Next we are told that "God came to Abimelech in a dream by night" (Gen. xx. 3), and from that time we hear of similar revelations made by night in dreams throughout the whole history of the chosen people. Frequently, however, the dreams are called visions. Thus Balaam prophesied: "He hath said, which heard the words of God and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open." Daniel had his secret "revealed in a night vision," but such favor was denied to Saul, for "the Lord answered him not, neither by dream nor by Urim, nor by prophets." To Solomon, on the contrary, "the Lord appeared in a dream by night" many times; Joel was promised that "old men should dream dreams and young men shall see visions," a pledge quoted by St. Peter as having been amply fulfilled in his day (Acts ii. 17). For dreams did not lose their importance at the coming of Christ. To his reputed father "the Angel of the Lord appeared in a dream," bidding him[Pg 96] to take Mary to his wife; again he was warned in a dream "not to return to Herod," and the Lord spake "to Paul in the night by a vision" more than once, as he was by a dream also sent to Macedonia.

What in these and similar cases is accepted as divine inspiration, is in secular history generally looked upon as mysterious, magic revelation; but the phenomena remain the same in all instances, and those appearing in dreams are identical with the symptoms exhibited in revelations occurring during the day, when the favored recipient is wide awake. Clairvoyance by night differs in no way from clairvoyance during the day; a state of ecstasy, a trance, is necessary in either case. That prophetic dreams generally remain unknown—outside of Holy Writ—must be ascribed to the fact that they leave no recollection behind, unless they are continued into a state of half-sleep, from which a sudden awakening takes place; and soon then they are invariably clothed in some allegoric form, and become liable to be erroneously or, at least, imperfectly interpreted. Thus dreams, like trances, often prefigure death under the form of a journey, and represent the dying man as an uprooted tree, a withered flower, or a drowning swimmer. The early Christians, foreseeing martyrdom, very frequently received in dreams an intimation of their impending fate under such symbolic forms, and, what was quite peculiar to their visions was that they often extended to the pagan jailors and keepers, whose minds had been excited by witnessing the sufferings and the[Pg 97] constancy of their victims, and who, in many cases, became, in consequence of these dreams, converts to the new faith. The facility, however, with which such symbols can be misunderstood, has been as fatal to dreams in the estimation of most men, as the inaccurate manner in which the real revelation is often presented

to the still half-sleeping mind. Hence the popular belief that dreams "go by contraries," as vulgar slang expresses it. This faith is based upon the well-established fact that a genuine dream, in the act of impressing itself upon memory, often suffers not only mutilation but actual reversion. Thus Rogers saw, in a dream, Hikey, a small, weak man, murder a powerful giant, Caulfield—in the actual encounter, which he had really foreseen, the latter killed his puny antagonist. It is, therefore, as dangerous to "believe in dreams," as to deny their value altogether and to ascribe all realizations of dreams, with, Macnish, to mere accident. ("Sleep," p. 81.) Men of cool judgment and clear mind have at all times been found on the side of believers, and even our great Franklin, with his eminently practical mind and well-known aversion to every kind of superstition, firmly trusted in views which he believed to have come to him in dreams.

Antiquity believed in dreams, not only as means by which the Gods revealed their will, but as special favors accorded to fortunate men. Thus we are told that once two men were traveling together from Arcadia to Megara; when they reached the city, one of the two[Pg 98] remained at an inn, while the other went to stay with a a friend. Both, wearied by the journey, retired to rest; but the traveler who was at a private house dreamt in the night that his friend urged him to come to his assistance, as the innkeeper was about to murder him. Terrified by the vivid dream, he jumped up; but, upon reflection, he concluded that the whole was but an idle fancy, and lay down again. Thereupon the dream was repeated; but this time his friend added, that it was too late to come to his aid now, as he had been murdered, and his body would in the morning be carried out of the city, concealed under a load of manure. This second dream made such an impression upon the Arcadian that he went at an early hour to the city gate, and to his amazement soon saw a wagon loaded with manure approaching the place where he stood. He stopped the driver and asked him what he had hidden in his wagon? The man fled, trembling; the body of the murdered friend was found, and the treacherous innkeeper paid with his life for his crime. (Cicero, *De divin.*)

One of the oldest of well-authenticated dreams in Christian times, revealed to St. Basil the death of Julian the Apostate. It seemed to him in his sleep that he saw the martyr Mercurius receive from God the order to kill the tyrant, and after a short time return and say: "O Lord, Julian is killed as Thou hast commanded!" The saint was so firmly convinced of having received a direct revelation from heaven,[Pg 99] that he immediately made the news known to the people, and thus gained new honor when the official information at last arrived. (*Vita S. Basil.*, etc., p. 692.) Here, also, the deep-seated hatred of the Christian priest against the Emperor, who dared to renew the worship of the ancient gods of the Pagans, no doubt suggested the vivid dream, while, on the other hand, the transmission of the actual revelation was so imperfect as to change the real occurrence—Julian's death by a Persian lance—according to the familiar way of thinking of St. Basil, into his execution at divine command by a holy martyr. There is no lack of renowned men of all ages who have had their remarkable dreams, and who have, fortunately for future investigation, recorded them carefully. Thus Melanchthon tells us that he was at a convent with a certain Dr. Jonas, when letters reached him requesting him to convey to his friend the sad news of his daughter's sudden death. The great reformer was at a loss how to discharge the painful duty, and driven by an instinctive impulse, asked Dr. Jonas whether he had ever had any remarkable dreams. The latter replied that he had dreamt, during the preceding night, of his return home, and of the joyful welcome he had met from all his family, except his oldest daughter, who had not appeared. Thereupon Melanchthon told him that his dream had been true, and that he would never see his daughter again, as she had been summoned to her eternal home.

Petrarch had a dream[Pg 100] which was evidently also the reflex of his thoughts in the day-time, but accompanied by a direct revelation. He had been, for some days, very anxious about the health of his patron, a Colonna, who was Bishop of Lombez, and one night saw himself in a dream walking by his friend's side, but unable to keep pace with him; the bishop walked faster and faster, bidding him stay behind, and when the poet insisted upon following him, he suddenly assumed a death-like appearance, and said, "No, I will not have you go with me now!" During the same night in which Petrarch had this dream in Parma, the bishop died at his palace in Lombez. The well-known Thomas Wotton, also, dreamt a short time before his death, while residing in Kent, that he saw five persons commit a robbery at Oxford. On the following day he added a postscript to a letter which he had written to his son Henry, then a student at that university, in which he mentioned his dream, and asked if such a robbery had really taken place. The letter reached the young man on the morning after the crime had been committed, when town and university were alike in a state of intense excitement. He made the letter immediately known to the authorities, who found in the account of the dream so accurate a description of the robbers, that they were enabled at once to ascertain who were the guilty persons, and to have them arrested before they could escape. (Beaumont, p. 223.) The great German poet Gustav Schwab received the first intimation of the[Pg 101] French Revolution in 1848 through a remarkable dream which his daughter had in the night preceding the 24th of February. She had been attacked by a malignant fever, and was very restless and nervously excited; during that night she saw, in her feverish dreams, the streets of Paris filled with excited crowds, and was forced to witness the most fearful scenes. When her father came to her bedside next morning, she gave him a minute description of the building of barricades, the bloody encounters between the troops and the citizens, and of a number of sad tragedies which she had seen enacted in the narrow and dark streets of the great city. The father, though deeply impressed by the vivid character of the dream, ascribed it to a reminiscence of the scenes enacted during the Revolution of 1789, and dismissed the subject, although his child insisted upon the thoroughly modern character of the buildings, and the costumes and manners of all she had seen. Great was, therefore, the amazement of the poet and of all who had heard of the dream, when, several days afterwards, the first news reached them of the expulsion of the Orleans family, and much greater still when the papers brought, one by one, descriptions of the scenes which the feverish dream had enabled the girl to see in minute detail, and yet with unerring accuracy. It is true that the poet, in whose biography the dream with all the attending circumstances is mentioned at full length, had for years anticipated such a revolution, and often, with a poet's[Pg 102] graphic power, conjured up the scenes that were likely to happen whenever the day of the tempest should arrive. Thus his daughter's mind had, no doubt, long been filled with images of this kind, and was in a state peculiarly susceptible for impressions connected with the subject. There remains, however, the magic phenomenon that she saw, not a poet's fiction, but actual occurrences with all their details, and saw them in the very night during which they happened. In the papers of Sir Robert Peel was found a note concerning his journey from Antibes to Nice, in 1854. He was on board the steamer Erculano, which, on the 25th of April, so violently collided with another steamer, the Sicilia, that it sank immediately, and two-thirds of the passengers perished. Among those who were rescued were the great English statesman and the maid of two ladies, the wife and the daughter of a counselor of a French court of justice at Dijon. The young girl had had a presentiment of impending evil, but her wish to postpone the journey had been overruled. The father, also, though knowing nothing of the precise whereabouts of his beloved ones, had been much troubled in mind about their safety, and in the very night in which the accident happened,

saw the whole occurrence in a harassing dream. He distinctly beheld the vessel disappear in the waves, and a number of victims, among whom were his wife and his child, struggling for life, till they finally perished. He awoke in a state of great anguish, summoned his servants to keep him com[Pg 103]pany, and told them what he had dreamt. A few hours later the telegraph informed him of the accident, and of his own grievous affliction. (*Journ. de l'âme*, Févr. 1857, p. 253.)

While in these dreams events were made known which happened at the same time, in other dreams the future itself is revealed. Cicero, in his work on Divination (I. 27, and II. 66), and Valerius Maximus have preserved a number of such dream-visions, which were famous already in the days of antiquity; a dream concerning the tyrant Dionysius was especially well known.

It seems that a woman, called Himera, found herself in a dream among the gods on Olympus, and there saw chained to the throne of Jupiter a large man with red hair and spotted countenance. When she asked the divine messenger who had carried her to those regions, who that man was, he told her it was the scourge of Italy and Sicily, a man who, when unchained, would destroy many cities. She related her dream on the following morning to her friends, but found no explanation, till several years afterwards, when Dionysius ascended the throne. She happened to be in the crowd which had assembled to witness the triumph of the new monarch, and when she saw the tyrant, she uttered a loud cry, for she had recognized in him the man in chains under Jupiter's throne. The cry attracted attention; she was brought before Dionysius, forced to relate her dream, and sent to be executed. Equally well known was the remarkable dream which[Pg 104] Socrates had a short time before his death. His sentence had already been passed, but the day for its execution was not yet made known, when Crito, one of his friends, came to him and informed him that it would probably be ordered for the next morning. The great philosopher replied with his usual calmness: "If such is the will of the gods, be it so; but I do not think it will be to-morrow. I had, just before you entered, a sweet dream. A woman of transcending beauty, and dressed in a long white robe, appeared to me, called me by name, and said, 'In three days you will return to your beloved Phthia' (Socrates' native place)." He did not die till the third day.

Alexander the Great came more than once, during his remarkable career, in peculiar contact with prophetic dreams. He was thus informed of the coming of Cassander long before he ever saw him, and even of the influence which the still unknown friend would have on his fate. When the latter at last appeared at court, Alexander looked at him long and anxiously, and recognized in him the man he had so often seen in his dreams. It so happened, however, that before his suspicions assumed a positive form, a Greek distich was mentioned to him, written to prove the utter worthlessness of all dreams, and the effect of these lines, combined with the discovery that Cassander was the son of his beloved Antipater, induced him to lay aside all apprehensions. Nevertheless, his friend subsequently poisoned him in cold blood. Not less[Pg 105] famous was the dream which warned Caius Gracchus of his own sad fate. He saw in his sleep the shadow of his brother Tiberius, and heard him announce in a clear voice, that Caius also would share his tragic end, and be murdered like himself in the Capitol. The great Roman frequently related this dream, and the historian Cœlius records that he heard it repeated during Gracchus' life-time. It is well known that the latter afterwards became a tribune, and was killed while he held that office, in the same manner as his brother. Cicero also had his warning dream. He was escaping from his enemies, who had driven him out of Rome, and seeking safety in his Antium villa. Here he dreamt, one night, that, as he was wandering through a waste, deserted country, the Consul Marius met him, accompanied by the usual retinue, and adorned with all the insignia of his rank, and asked him why he was so melancholy, and why he had fled from Rome. When he had

answered the question, Marius took him by his right hand, and summoning his chief officer to his side, ordered him to carry the great orator to the temple of Jupiter, built by Marius himself, while he assured Cicero he would there meet with new hopes. It was afterwards ascertained that at the very hour of the dream, the Senate had been discussing in the temple of Jupiter the speedy return of Cicero. It would have been well for the great Cæsar, also, if he had deigned to listen to the warning voice of dreams, for in the night before his murder, his wife,[Pg 106] Calphurnia, saw him, in a dream, fall wounded and copiously bleeding into her arms, and there end his life. She told him of her dream, and on her knees besought him not to go out on that day; but Cæsar, fearing he might be suspected of giving undue weight to a woman's dreams, made light of her fears, went to the Senate, and met his tragic fate. Among later Romans the Emperor Theodosius was most strikingly favored by dreams, if we may rely upon the statement of Ammianus Marcellinus (I. 29). Two courtiers, anxious to ascertain who should succeed the Emperor Valens on the throne, employed a kind of magic instrument, resembling the modern psychograph, and succeeded in deciphering the letters Theod. Their discovery became known to the jealous emperor, who ordered not only Theodorus, his second secretary of state, to be executed, but with him a large number of eminent personages whose names began with the ominous five letters. For some unknown reasons, Theodosius, then in Spain, escaped his suspicions, and yet it was he, who, when Valens fell in the war against the Goths, was summoned home by the next emperor, Gratianus, to save the empire and assume the supreme command of the army. When the successful general returned to Byzantium to make his report to the emperor, he had himself a dream in which he saw the great Patriarch of Antioch, Meletius, invest him with the purple, and place the imperial crown upon his head. Gratianus, struck by the brilliancy of the victory obtained at the[Pg 107] moment of supreme danger, made Theodosius Emperor of the East, and returned to Rome. During the following year (380) a great council was held in Constantinople, and here, amid a crowd of assembled dignitaries of the church, Theodosius instantly recognized the Bishop of Antioch, whom he had never seen except in his dream.

It is not generally known that the prediction of future greatness which Shakespeare causes the three witches to convey to Macbeth, rests on an historic basis. The announcement came to him, however, probably not at an actual meeting, but by means of a prophetic dream, which presented to the ambitious chieftain the appearance of an encounter with unearthly agents. This presumption is strengthened by the first notice of the mysterious event, which occurs, it is believed, in "Wyntownis Cronykil," where Macbeth is reported to have had a vivid dream of three weird women, who foretold him his fate. Boethius derived his information from this source, and for unknown reasons added not only Banquo as a witness of the scene, but described it, also, first of all chroniclers, as an actual meeting in a forest.

The report that the discovery of the famous Venus of Milo was due to a dream, is not improbable, but is as yet without sufficient authentication. The French Consul, Brest, who was a resident of Milo, dreamed, it is stated, two nights in succession, that he had caused diggings to be made at a certain place in the island and[Pg 108] that his efforts had been rewarded by the discovery of a beautiful statue. He paid no attention to the dream; but it was repeated a third time, and now so distinctly that he not only saw clearly all the surroundings, but, also, the traces of a recent fire on the spot that had been pointed out to him before. When he went on the following day to the place, he instantly recognized the traces of fire, began his researches, and discovered not only the Venus, now the glory of the Louvre, but, also, several other most valuable statues. The well-known dream concerning Major André is open to the same objections,

although it is quoted in good faith by Mrs. Crowe (i., p. 59). We are told that the Rev. Mr. Cunningham, the poet, saw in a dream a man who was captured by armed soldiers and hanged on a tree. To his utter consternation, he recognized on the following day, in Major André, who was then for the first time presented to him, the person he had seen in his dream. The latter was then just on the point of embarking for America, where he met with his sad fate.

A large number of dreams which are looked upon as prophetic, are nothing more than the result of impressions made on the mind during sleep by some bodily sensation. A swelling or an inflammation, for instance, is frequently announced beforehand by pain in the affected part of the body; the mind receives through the nerves an impression of this pain and clothes it, during sleep and in a dream, into some familiar garb, the biting of a serpent, the sting of an insect, or, even,[Pg 109] the stab of a dagger. An occasional coincidence serves to lend prestige to such simple and perfectly natural dreams. Thus Stilling ("Jenseits," p. 284) records the well-known story of a young man in Padua, who dreamed one night that he was bitten by one of the marble lions which stand before the church of St. Justina. Passing by the place, on the following day, with some companions, he recalled the dream, and putting his hand into the mouth of one of the lions, he said, defiantly: "Look at the fierce lion that bit me last night." But at the same moment he uttered a piercing cry and drew back his hand in great terror: a scorpion, hid in the lion's mouth, had stung him, and the poor youth died of the venom. The German poet Conrad Gessner dreamed, in a similar manner, that a snake bit him in his left breast; the matter was completely forgotten, when five days later a slight rising appeared on the spot, which speedily developed itself into a fatal ulcer, and caused his death in a short time.

Far more interesting, and occasionally productive of good results, are dreams which might be called retrospective, inasmuch as they reveal events of the past, which stand in some connection with present or impending necessities. Many of these, no doubt, arise simply from the recovery of forgotten facts in our memory; others, however, cannot be thus explained. Justinus tells us of Dido's dream, in which she saw her departed husband, Sichæus, who pointed out to her his concealed treasures and advised her to seek safety in[Pg 110] flight. St. Augustine also has an account of a father who after death appeared to his son and showed him a receipted account, the loss of which had caused his heir much anxiety. (*De cura pro mortuis*, ch. xi.) After Dante's death the thirteenth canto of his Paradise could nowhere be found, and the apparent loss filled all Italy with grief and sorrow. His son, Pietro Alighieri, however, saw a long time afterwards, in a dream, his father, who came to his bedside and told him that the missing papers were concealed under a certain plank near the window at which he had been in the habit of writing. It was only when all other researches had proved vain, that, attention was paid to the dream; but when the plank was examined the canto was found in the precise place which the dream had indicated.

A similar dream of quite recent occurrence was accidentally more thoroughly authenticated than is generally the case with such events. The beautiful wife of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild of Paris had lost a valuable ring while hunting in the woods near her castle of Ferrières. It so happened that early associations made the jewel specially dear to her, and she felt the loss grievously; a reward of fifteen hundred francs was, therefore, offered at once for its recovery. The night after the hunt, the daughter of one of the keepers saw in a dream an unknown man of imposing appearance, who told her to go at daybreak to a certain crossroad in the forest, where she would find the ring at the foot of a beech-tree, close to the highway. She[Pg 111] awakes, dresses herself at once, and goes to the place of which she has dreamed; after half an hour's walk she reaches the crossroads and almost at the same moment sees something glittering and shining

like a firefly, picks it up, and behold! it is the ring. The girl had not even seen the hunt, nor did she know anything of the loss of the jewel; the whole occurrence, and the place where it was lost, all were pointed out to her in her dream. (*Le Monde Illustré*, Dec. 15, 1860).

It has already been mentioned that the question has often been mooted whether the mind was really quite at rest during sleep, or still operative in dreams. Some authors deny its activity altogether; others admit a partial activity. The philosopher Kant went so far as to maintain that perceptions had during sleep were clearer and fuller than those of the day, because of the perfect rest of the other senses. Recollection, alone, he added, was missing, because the mind acted in sleep without the coöperation of the body.

There are, however, certain facts which seem to prove that the mind does, at least, not altogether cease its activity while the body is asleep. How else could we explain the power many persons undoubtedly possess to awake at a fixed hour, and the success with which, more than once, great mental efforts have been made during profound sleep? Of the latter, Tartini's famous sonata is a striking instance. He had endeavored in vain to finish this great work; inspiration would not come, and he had abandoned the task in[Pg 112] despair. During the night he had a dream in which he once more tried his best, but in vain; at the moment of despair, however, the Devil appeared to him and promised to finish the work in return for his soul. The composer, nothing loath, surrenders his soul and hears his magnificent work gloriously completed on the violin. He wakes up in perfect delight, goes to his desk, and at once writes down his "Devil's Sonata." Even children are known occasionally to be able to give intelligent answers while fast asleep; the questions, however, must be in accordance with the current of their thoughts, otherwise they are apt to be aroused. A case is quoted by Reil of two soldiers who used, at times, to keep up an uninterrupted conversation during a whole night, while they were to all appearances fast asleep. A lady, also, was unable to refuse answers to questions put to her at night, and had at last to lock herself in carefully whenever she went to sleep.

Hence it is that some of the most profound thinkers who have discussed the subject of dreams, like Descartes and Leibnitz, Jouffroy and Dugald Stewart, Richard and Carus, with a number of others, assert the uninterrupted wakefulness of the mind. Some authors believe that the spiritual part of man needs no sleep, but delights in the comfort of feeling that the body is in perfect repose, and of forgetting, by these means, for a time the troubles of daily life, and the responsibilities of our earthly existence. They base this view upon the fact, that, as far as we can judge, the mind is,[Pg 113] during sleep, independent of the body and the outer world. Thinking is quite possible during sleep without dreaming, and certain bodily sensations, even, are correctly perceived, as when we turn over in our sleep, because lying on one side produces pain or uneasiness. We not only talk while we are asleep, but laugh or weep, sigh or groan. A slight noise, a whispered word, affect the course of our thoughts, and produce new images in our dreams, as certain affections and even the pressure upon certain organs are sure to produce invariably the same dreams. Space and time disappear, however, and naturally, because we can measure them only by the aid of our senses, and these are, for the time, inactive. Hence Dugald Stewart ascribes the manner in which a moment's dream often comprises a year, or a whole lifetime, to the fact that, when we are asleep, the images created by our imagination appear to be realities, while those which we form when we are awake are known to us to be mere fictions, and hence not subject to the laws of time.

It will not surprise us, therefore, to find that this activity of the mind, deprived of the usual means of making itself known to others by gesture, sound, or action, seeks frequently a symbolical utterance, and this is the grain of truth here also hid under the vast amount of rubbish, known as the interpretation of dreams. Troubles and difficulties may thus appear as storms; sorrow and grief as tears; troubled waters may represent pain, and smooth ice impending danger;[Pg 114] a dry river-bed an approaching famine, and pretty flowers great joy to come, provided, always, we are disposed to admit a higher class of prophetic dreams. Such a view is supported by high authority, for since the days of Aristotle, great writers, divines as well as philosophers, have endeavored to classify dreams according to their nature and importance. The great reformer, Melanchthon, in his work on the soul, divided them into common dreams, void of importance; prophetic dreams, arising from the individual gifts of the sleeper; divine dreams, inspired by God either directly or through the agency of angels, and finally, demoniac dreams, such as the witches' sabbath. One great difficulty attending all such classification arises, however, from the well-known fact, already alluded to, that external sensations are by far the most frequent causes of dreams. Even these have been systematically arranged by some writers, most successfully, perhaps, in the work of Maine de Biran, but he overlooks again the numerous cases in which external noises and similar accidents produce a whole train of thoughts. Thus Pope dreamed of a Spaniard who impudently entered his library, ransacked the books on the shelves, and turned a deaf ear to all his remonstrances. The impression was so forcible that he questioned all his servants, and investigated the matter thoroughly, till he was finally forced to acknowledge that the whole transaction was a dream caused by the fall of a book in his library, which he heard in his sleep. A still[Pg 115] more remarkable case occurred once in a hotel in Dantzic, where not one person only, but all the guests, without exception, dreamed of the sudden arrival of a number of travelers, who disturbed the whole house, and took possession of their rooms with unusual clatter and noise. Not one had arrived, but during the night a violent storm had arisen, causing doors to slam and window-shutters to flap against the house, noises which had aroused in more than fifty people precisely the same impressions.[Pg 116]

IV.

VISIONS.

Concipiendis visionibus quas phantasias vocant.

QUINTILIAN.

Visions, that is, the perception of apparently tangible objects in the outer world, which only exist in our imagination, have been known from time immemorial among all nations on earth. They are, in themselves, perfectly natural, and can frequently be traced back without difficulty to bodily affections or a disordered state of the mind, so that many eminent physicians dispose of them curtly as mere incidental symptoms of congestion or neuralgia. They may present real men and things, known beforehand, and now reproduced in such a manner as to appear objectively; or they may be ideal forms, the product of the moment, and incompatible with the laws of actual

life. Persons who have visions and know nothing of their true nature, are apt to become intensely excited, as if they had been transferred into another world. The images they behold seem to them of supernatural origin, and may inspire them with lofty thoughts and noble impulses, but only too frequently they disturb their peace of mind and lead them to crime or despair.[Pg 117]

When visions extend to other senses besides sight, and the peculiar state of mind by which they are caused affects different parts of the body at once, they are called hallucinations; most frequent among insane people, of whom, according to Esquirol, eighty in a hundred are thus affected, they are generally quite insignificant; while visions through the eye, are often accompanied by very remarkable magic phenomena. Thus the visions which great men like Cromwell and Descartes, Byron or Goethe, record of their own experience, were evidently signs of the great energy of their mental life, while in others they are as clearly symptoms of disease. Ascribed by the ancients to divine influence, Christianity has invariably denounced them—when not indubitably inspired by God, as in the case of the martyr Stephen and the apostle St. John—as works of the Devil. At all times they have been communicated to others, either by contagion or, in rare cases, by the imposition of hands, as they have been artificially produced. Thus extreme bodily fatigue and utter prostration after long illness are apt to cause hallucinations. Albert Smith, for instance, while ascending Mont Blanc, and feeling utterly exhausted, saw all his surroundings clearly with his eyes, and yet, at the same time, beheld marvelous things with the so-called inner sense. A Swiss who, in 1848, during a severe cold, crossed from Wallis to Kandersteg by the famous Gemmi Pass, eight thousand feet high, saw on his way a number of men shoveling the snow from his[Pg 118] path, fellow-travelers climbing up on all sides, and rolling masses of snow which changed into dogs; he heard the blows of axes and the laughing and singing of distant shepherds, while his road was utterly deserted, and not a human soul within many miles. His hands and feet were found frozen when he arrived at last at his quarters for the night, and ten days later he died from the effects of his exposure. During the retreat of the French from Russia the poor sufferers, frozen and famished, were continually tormented by similar hallucinations, which increased their sufferings at times to such a degree as to lead them to commit suicide. Another frequent cause of visions is long-continued fasting combined with more or less ascetic devotion. This is said to explain why the prophets of the Old Testament were so vigorously forbidden to indulge in wine or rich fare. Thus Aaron was told: "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle" (Levit. x. 9); Moses remained forty days, and "neither did eat bread nor drink wine," when he was on Mount Sinai (Deuter. ix. 9); the Nazarites were ordered not to "drink any liquor of grapes, nor to eat moist grapes or dried," and even to abstain from vinegar (Numbers vi. 3), and Daniel and his companions had nothing but "pulse to eat and water to drink" (Dan. i. 12), in order to prepare them for receiving "wisdom and knowledge and the understanding of dreams and visions."

Narcotics also, and, in our day, most of the anæsthet[Pg 119]ics can produce visions and hallucinations, but the result is in all such cases much less interesting than when they are produced spontaneously. Tobacco and opium, betel, hasheesh, and coca are the principal means employed; but Siberia has besides its narcotic mushrooms, Polynesia its ava, New Granada and the Himalaya the thorn-apple, Florida its emetic apalachine, and the northern regions of America and Europe have their ledum. The most effective among these narcotics seems to be the Indian hemp, since the visions it produces surpass even the marvelous effects of opium, as has been recently again most graphically described by Bayard Taylor. Laughing-gas, also, has frequently similar effects, and affords, besides, the precious privilege of freedom from the painful, often

excruciating consequences of other narcotics. When perfumes are employed for the express purpose of producing visions, it is difficult to ascertain how much is due to their influence, and how much to the over-excited mind of the seer. Benvenuto Cellini describes—though probably not in the most trustworthy manner—the amazing effect produced upon himself and a boy by his side, by the perfumes which a priest burnt in the Coliseum. The whole vast building seemed to him filled with demons, and the boy saw thousands of threatening men, four huge giants, and fire bursting out in countless places. The great artist was told, at the same time, that a great danger was threatening him, and that he would surely lose his beloved Angelica[Pg 120] within the month; both events occurred as predicted, and thus proved that in this case at least magic phenomena had accompanied the visions. (*Goethe, B. Cellini*, l. iv. ch. 2.)

Among other external causes which are apt to produce visions, must be mentioned violent motions, especially when they are revolving, as is the case with the Shamans of the Laplanders and the dancing Dervishes of the East; self-inflicted wounds, such as the priests of Baal caused in order to excite their power of divination, and long-continued imprisonment, as illustrated in the well-known cases of Benvenuto Cellini and Silvio Pellico. The latter was constantly tormented by sighs or suppressed laughter which he heard in his dungeon; then by invisible hands pulling at his dress, knocking down his books or trying to put out his light, till he began seriously to suspect that he might be the victim of invisible malignant powers. Fortunately all these phenomena disappeared at break of day, and thus his vigorous mind, supported by true piety, was enabled to keep his judgment uninjured.

Diseases of every kind are a fruitful source of visions and some are rarely without them; but the character of visions differs according to the nature of the affections. Persons who suffer with the liver have melancholy, consumptive patients have cheerful visions. Epileptics often see fearful spectres during their paroxysms, and persons bitten by mad dogs see the animal that has caused their sufferings. The case of the book[Pg 121]seller Nicolai in Berlin is well known; the disease of which he suffered, is not only very common in some parts of Russia, but productive of precisely the same symptoms. The patients experience first a sensation of great despondency, followed by a period of profound melancholy, during which they see themselves surrounded by a number of persons, with whom they converse and quarrel, half conscious of their own delusion and yet not able to master it wholly. They are generally bled, whereupon the images become transparent and shrink into smaller and smaller space, till they finally disappear entirely. Affections of the heart and the subsequent unequal distribution of the blood through the system are apt to produce peculiar sounds, which at times fashion themselves into loud and harmonious pieces. The excitement usually attendant upon specially fatal plagues and contagious diseases increases the tendency which the latter naturally have to cause hallucinations. During a plague in the reign of Justinian, men were seen walking through the crowd and touching here and there a person; the latter were at once attacked by the disease and invariably succumbed. Upon another such occasion marks and spots appeared on the clothing of those who had caught the contagion, as if made by invisible hands, the sufferers began next to see a number of spectres and died in a short time. The same symptoms have accompanied the cholera in modern times, and more than once strange, utterly unknown persons were not only seen[Pg 122] but heard, as they were conversing with others; what they said was written down in many cases, and proved to be predictions of approaching visits of the dread disease to neighboring houses. A magic power of foresight seems in these cases to be developed by the extreme excitement or deep anxiety, but the unconscious

clairvoyance assumes the form of persons outside of their own mental sphere, within which they alone existed.

By far the most frequent causes of visions are, however, those of psychical nature, like fixed ideas, intense passions, or deep-rooted prejudices, and concealed misdeeds. When they are produced by such causes they have often the appearance of having led to the commission of great crimes. Thus Julian the Apostate, who had caused the image of his guardian angel to be put upon all his coins and banners, naturally had this form deeply impressed upon his mind. In the night before a decisive battle, he saw, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, this protecting genius in the act of turning away from him, and this vision made so deep an impression upon his mind that he interpreted it as an omen of his impending death. On the following day he fell in battle. The fearful penalty inflicted upon Charles IX. by his own conscience is well known; after the massacre of St. Bartholomew he saw, by day and by night, the forms of his victims around him, till death made an end to his sufferings. On our own continent, one of the early conquerors gave a striking[Pg 123] instance of the manner in which such visions are produced. He was one of the adventurers who had reached Darien, and was on the point of plundering a temple; but, a few days before, an Indian woman had told him that the treasures it held were guarded by evil spirits, and if he entered it the earth would open and swallow up the temple and the conquerors alike. Nothing daunted, he led his men to the attack; but, as they came in sight, he suddenly saw, in the evening light, how the colossal building rocked to and fro as in a tempest, and thoroughly intimidated he rode away with his followers, leaving the temple and its treasures unharmed. That visions are apt to precede atrocious crimes is quite natural, since they are in such cases nothing but the product of the intense excitement under which murders are often committed; but, it would be absurd to look upon them as motive causes. Ravaillac had constant visions of angels, saints, and demons, while preparing his mind for the assassination of Henry IV., and the young student who attempted the murder of Napoleon at Schönbrunn repeatedly saw the genius of Germany, which appeared to him and encouraged him to free his country from the usurper. Persons who attempt to summon ghosts are very apt to see them, because their mind is highly wrought up by their proceedings and they confidently expect to have visions. But some men possess a similar power without making any special effort or peculiar preparations, their firm volition sufficing for the purpose. Thus Talma[Pg 124] could at all times force himself to see, in the place of the actual audience before whom he was acting, an assembly of skeletons, and he is said never to have acted better than when he gave himself up to this hallucination. Painters, also, frequently have the power to summon before their mind's eye the features of those whose portrait they are painting; Blake, for instance, was able actually to finish likenesses from images he saw sitting in the chair where the real persons had been seated.

While visions are quite common, delusions of the other senses are less frequent. The insane alone hear strange conversations. Hallucinations of the taste cause patients to enjoy delightful dishes, or to partake of spoiled meat and other unpalatable viands, which have no existence. Sweet smells and incense are often perceived, bad odors much less frequently. The touch is of all senses the least likely to be deceived; still deranged people occasionally feel a slight touch as a severe blow, and persons suffering from certain diseases are convinced that ants, spiders, or other insects are running over their bodies.

The favorite season of visions is night—mainly the hour about midnight—and in the whole year, the time of Advent, but also the nights from Christmas to New Year. This is, of course, not a feature of supernatural life, but the simple effect of the greater quiet and the more thoughtful,

inward life, which these seasons are apt to bring to busy men. The reality of our surroundings[Pg 125] disappears with the setting sun, and in deep night we are rendered almost wholly independent of the influence exercised in the day by friends, family, and even furniture. All standards of measurement, moreover, disappear, and we lose the correct estimate of both space and time. Turning our thoughts at such times with greater energy and perseverance inward, our imagination has free scope, and countless images appear before our mind's eye which are not subject to the laws of real life. Darkness, stillness, and solitude, the three great features of midnight seasons, all favor the full activity of our fancy, and set criticism at defiance by denying us all means of comparison with real sounds or sights. At the same time, it is asserted, that under such circumstances men are also better qualified to perceive manifestations which, during the *turba* of daily life, are carelessly ignored or really imperceptible to the common senses. So long as the intercourse with the world and its exigencies occupy all our thoughts, and self-interest makes us look fixedly only at some one great purpose of life, we are deaf and blind to all that does not clearly belong to this world. But when these demands are no longer made upon us, and especially when, as in the time of Advent, our thoughts are somewhat drawn from earthly natures, and our eyes are lifted heavenward, then we are enabled to give free scope to our instincts, or, if we prefer the real name, to the additional sense by which we perceive intangible things. A comparison has often been drawn between the ability to[Pg 126] see visions and our power to distinguish the stars. In the day, the brilliancy of the sun so far outshines the latter, that we see not a single one; at night they step forth, as it were, from the dark, and the deeper the blackness of the sky, the greater their own brightness. Are they, on that account, nothing more than creatures of our imagination, set free by night and darkness?

As for the favorite places where visions most frequently are seen, it seems that solitudes have already in ancient times always been looked upon as special resorts for evil spirits. The deserts of Asia, with their deep gullies and numerous caves, suggested a population of shy and weird beings, whom few saw and no one knew fully. Hence the fearful description of Babylon in her overthrow, when "Their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there and satyrs shall dance there." (Isaiah xiii. 21). The New Testament speaks in like manner of the deserts of Palestine as the abode of evil spirits, and in later days the Faroe Islands were constantly referred to as peopled with weird and unearthly beings. The deserts of Africa are full of Djinns, and the vast plains of the East are peopled with weird apparitions. The solitudes of Norwegian mountain districts abound with gnomes and sprites, and waste places everywhere are no sooner abandoned by men than they are occupied by evil spirits and become the scenes of wild and gruesome visions.

Well-authenticated cases of visions are recorded in unbroken succession from the times of antiquity to[Pg 127] our own day, and leave no doubt on the mind that they are not only of common occurrence among men, but generally, also, accompanied by magic phenomena of great importance. The ancients saw, of course, most frequently their gods; the pagans, who had been converted to Christianity, their former idols threatening them with dire punishment; and Christians, their saints and martyrs, their angels and demons. Thus all parties are supported by authorities in no way peculiar to one faith or another, but common to all humanity; and the battle is fought, for a time at least, between faith and faith, and between vision and vision. A famous rhetor, Aristides, who is mentioned in history as one of the mightiest champions polytheism ever has been able to raise against triumphant Christianity, saw, in his hours of exaltation, the great Æsculapius, who gave him directions how to carry on his warfare. At such times his public

addresses became so attractive that thousands of enthusiastic hearers assembled to hang upon his lips. The story of the genius of Socrates is well known; Aulus Gellius tells us how the great sage was seen standing motionless for twenty-four hours in the same place, before joining the expedition to Potidea, so absorbed in deep thought that it seemed as if his soul had left the body. Dion, Plato's most intimate friend, saw a huge Fury enter his house and sweep it with a broom; a conspiracy broke out, and he was murdered, after having lost his only son a few days before. (Plutarch's "Life of Dion," 55.) The same Simonides,[Pg 128] who according to Valerius Maximus (*De Somniis*, l. i. ch. 5), had escaped from shipwreck by the timely warning of a spirit, was once dining at the magnificent house of Skopas at Cranon, in Thessaly, when a servant entered to inform him that two gigantic youths were standing at the door and wished to see him immediately. He went out and found no one there; but, at the same moment, the roof and the walls of the dining-room fell down, burying all the guests under the ruins (Phædrus' Fab., iv. 24). The ancients looked upon the vision, in both cases, as merely effects of the prophetic power of the poet, which saved him from immediate death; once in the form of a spirit and the second time in the form of the Dioscuri. For, as Simonides had shortly before written a beautiful poem in honor of Castor and Pollux, his escape and the friendly warning were naturally attributed to the heroic youths, who constantly appear in history as protective genii. In Greece they were known to have fought, dressed in their purple cloaks and seated on snow-white horses, on the side of the Locri, and to have announced their victory on the same day in Olympia, and Sparta, in Corinth, and in Athens (Justin, ix. 3). In Rome they were credited with the victory on the banks of Lake Regillus, and reported to have, as in Greece, dashed into the city, far ahead of all messengers, to proclaim the joyful news. During the Macedonian war they met Publius Vatinius on his way to Rome and informed him that, on the preceding day, Æmilius Paulus had captured Perseus. Delighted[Pg 129] with the news, the prefect hastens to the Senate; but is discredited and actually sent to jail on the charge of indulging in idle gossip, unworthy of his high office. It was only when at last messengers came from the distant army and confirmed the report of Perseus' captivity, that the unlucky prefect was set free again and honored with high rewards.

In other cases the warning genius was seen in visions of different nature. Thus Hannibal was reported to have traced in his sleep the whole course and the success of all his plans, by the aid of his genius, who appeared to him in the shape of a child of marvelous beauty, sent by the great Jupiter himself to direct his movements, and to make him master of Italy. The child asked him to follow without turning to look back, but Hannibal, yielding to the innate tendency to covet forbidden fruit, looked behind him and saw an immense serpent overthrowing all impediments in his way. Then came a violent thunderstorm with fierce lightnings, which rent the strongest walls. Hannibal asked the meaning of these portents, and was told that the storm signified the total subjection of Italy, but that he must be silent and leave the rest to fate. That the vision was not fully realized, was naturally ascribed to his indiscretion. The genius of the two Consuls, P. Decius and Manlius Torquatus, assumed, on the contrary, the shape of a huge phantom which appeared at night in their camp at the foot of Vesuvius, and announced the decision that one leader must fall in order[Pg 130] to make the army victorious. Upon the strength of this vision the two generals decided that he whose troops should first show signs of yielding, should seek death by advancing alone against the Latin army. The legions of Decius, therefore, no sooner began to fall back, than he threw himself, sword in hand, upon the enemy, and not only died a glorious death for his country, but secured a brilliant victory to his brethren.

At a later period a genius saved the life of Octavian, when he and Antony were encamped at Philippi, on the eve of the great battle against Brutus and Cassius. The vision appeared not to himself, however, but to another person, his own physician, Artorus, who, in a dream, was ordered to advise his master to appear on the battle-field in spite of his serious indisposition. Octavian followed the advice and went out, though he had to be carried by his men in a litter; during his absence the soldiers of Brutus entered the camp and actually searched his tent, in which he would have perished inevitably without the timely warning. Of a very different nature was the vision of Cassius, the lieutenant of Antony, who, during his flight to Athens, saw at night a huge black phantom, which informed him that he was his evil spirit. In his terror he called his servants and inquired what they had seen, but they had noticed nothing. Thus tranquilized, he fell asleep again, but the phantom returned once more, and disturbed his mind so painfully that he remained awake the rest of the night, surrounded by his guards[Pg 131] and slaves. The vision was afterwards interpreted as an omen of his impending violent death.

The Emperor Trajan was saved from death during a fearful earthquake by a man of colossal proportions, who came to lead him out of his palace at Antioch; and Attila, who, to the surprise of the world, spared Rome and Italy at the request of Pope Leo the Great, mentioned as the true motive of his action the appearance of a majestic old man in priestly garments, who had threatened him, drawing his sword, with instant death if he did not grant all that the Roman high-priest should demand.

In other cases, which are as numerous as they are striking, the genius assumes the shape of a woman. Thus Dio Cassius ("Hist. Rome," l. lv.), as well as Suetonius ("Claudius," l. i), relate that when Drusus had ravaged Germany, and was on the point of crossing the Elbe, the formidable shape of a gigantic woman appeared to him, who waded up to the middle of the stream and then called out: "Whither, O Drusus? Canst thou put no limit to thy thirst of conquest? Back! the end of thy deeds and of thy life is at hand!" History records that Drusus fell back without apparent reason, and that he died before he reached the banks of the Rhine. Tacitus tells us, in like manner, a vision which encouraged Curtius Rufus at the time when he, a gladiator's son, and holding a most humble position, was accompanying a quæstor on his way to Africa. As he walked up and down a passage in deep medita[Pg 132]tion, a woman of unusual size appeared to him and said: "Thou, O Rufus, shalt be proconsul of this province!" The young man, perhaps encouraged and supported by a vision which was the result of his own ambitious dreams, rose rapidly by his eminent ability, and after he had reached the consulate, really obtained the province of Africa (Ann., xi. 21). The younger Pliny, who tells the same story in his admirable letter to Sura on the subject of magic, adds that the genius appeared a second time to the great proconsul, but remained silent. The latter saw in this silence a warning of approaching death, and prepared for his end, which did not fail soon to close his career.

It is very striking to see how in these visions also the inner life of man was invariably clearly and distinctly reflected. The ambitious youth saw his good fortune personified in the shape of a beautiful woman, which his excited imagination called Africa, and which he hoped some time or other to call his own. Brutus, on the contrary, full of anticipations of evil, and suffering, and perhaps unconsciously, bitter remorse on account of Cæsar's murder, saw his sad fate as a hideous demon. The army, also, sharing, no doubt, their leader's dark apprehensions, looked upon the black Æthiopian who entered the camp as an evil omen. The appointed meeting at Philippi was merely an evidence of the superior ability of Brutus, who foresaw the probable course of the war and knew the great strategic importance of the famous town.[Pg 133]

In the same manner a tradition was long cherished in Augsburg of a fanatic heroine on horseback, who appeared to Attila when he attempted to cross the river Lech on his way from Italy to Pannonia. She called out to him: "Back!" and made a deep impression upon his mind. The picture of the giant woman was long preserved in a Minorite convent in the city, and was evidently German in features and in costume. It is by no means impossible that the lofty but superstitious mind of the ruthless conqueror, after having long busied itself with his approaching attack upon a mighty, unknown nation, personified to himself in a momentary trance the genius of that race in the shape of a majestic woman.

This was all the more probable as Holy Writ also presents to us a whole series of mighty women who exercised at times a lasting influence on the fate of the chosen people, and the world's history abounds with similar instances. There was Deborah, "a prophetess who judged Israel at that time," and went to aid in the defeat of Sisera, and there was Huldah, the prophetess, who warned Josiah, king of Judah. We have the same grand images in Greek and in Roman history, and German annals mention more than one Jettha and Velleda. The series of warnings given by the more tender-hearted sex runs through the annals of modern races from the oldest times to our own day. One of the latest instances happened to a king well known for his sneering skepticism and his utter disbelief of all[Pg 134] higher powers. This was Bernadotte, who forsook his benefactor in order to mount the throne of Sweden, and turned his own sword against his former master. Long years after the fall of Napoleon, he was on the point of sending his son Oscar with an army against Norway, and met with much opposition in the Council of State. Full of impatience and indignation, he mounted his horse and rode out to cool his heated mind; as he approached a dark forest near Stockholm, he saw an old woman sitting by the wayside, whose quaint costume and wild, disheveled hair attracted his attention. He asked her roughly what she was doing there? Her reply was: "If Oscar goes into the war which you propose, he will not strike but receive the first blow." The king was impressed by the warning and returned, full of thoughts, to his palace; after a sleepless night he informed the Council of State that he had changed his views, and would not send the prince to Norway (*La Presse*, May 4, 1844). Even if we accept the interview with the woman as a mere vision, the effect of the king's long and anxious preoccupation with an important plan upon the success of which the security of his throne and the continuation of his dynasty might depend, the question still remains, why a man of his tastes and haughty skepticism should have clothed his doubts in words uttered by an old woman, dressed in fancy costume?

The number of practical, sensible men who have, even in recent times, believed themselves under the[Pg 135] special care and protection of a genius or guardian angel, is much larger than is commonly known. The ancients looked upon a genius as a part of their mythology; and modern Christians, who cherish this belief, refer to the fact that the Saviour said of little children: "In heaven their *angels* do always behold the face of my Father" (Matt. xviii. 10). These visions—for so they must be called—vary greatly in different persons. To some men they appear only when great dangers are threatening or sublime efforts have to be made; while in others, they assume, by their frequency, a more or less permanent form, and may even be inherited, becoming tutelary deities of certain houses, familiar spirits, or specially appointed guardian angels of the members of a family or single individuals. Hence, the well-known accounts of the genius of Socrates and the familiar spirits of the Bible, in ancient times. Hence, also, the almost uninterrupted line of similar accounts through the Middle Ages down to our own day. Thus, Campanella stated that whenever he was threatened with misfortune, he fell into a state half way

between waking and sleeping, in which he heard a voice say: "Campanella! Campanella!" and several other words, without ever seeing a person. Calignan, Chancelor of Navarre, heard in Béarn, his name called three times, and then received a warning from the same voice to leave the town promptly, as the plague was to rage there fearfully. He obeyed the order, and escaped the ravages of the terrible disease (Beaumont, "Tractat.," etc., p. 208).[Pg 136] The Jesuit Giovanni Carrera had a protecting genius, whom he frequently consulted in cases of special difficulty. He became so familiar with him, that he had himself waked every night for his prayers, but when at times he hesitated to rise at once, the spirit abandoned him for a time, and Carrera could only induce him to come back by long-continued praying and fasting ("Hist. S. J.," iii. p. 177).

The Bernadottes had a tradition that one of their ancestors had married a fairy, who remained the good genius of the family, and long since had predicted that one of that blood would mount a throne. The Bernadotte who became a king never forgot the prophecy, and was largely influenced by it, when the Swedish nobles offered him the throne. It is well known that Napoleon himself either believed, or affected to believe, in a good genius, who guided his steps and protected him from danger. He appeared, according to his own statements, sometimes in the shape of a ball of fire, which he called his "star," or as a man dressed in red, who paid him occasional visits. General Rapp relates that, in the year 1806, he once found the Emperor in his room, apparently absorbed in such deep meditation that he did not notice his entrance, but that, when fairly aroused, he seized Rapp by the arm and asked him if saw that star? When the latter replied that he saw nothing, Napoleon continued: "It is my star; it is standing just above you. It has never forsaken me; I see it on all important occasions; it orders me to go on, and has always[Pg 137] been a token of success." The story, coming from General Rapp himself, is quoted here as endorsed by the great historian, Amédée Thierry.

Des Mousseaux reports the following facts upon the evidence of trustworthy personal friends. (*La Magie*, etc., p. 366.) A Mme. N., the daughter of a general, was constantly visited by her mother, who had died long ago, and received from her frequent information of secret things, which procured for herself the reputation of being a prophetess. At one time her mother's spirit warned her to try and prevent her husband, who would die by suicide, from carrying out his purpose. Every precaution was taken, and even the knives and forks were removed after meals; but it so happened that a soldier of the National Guard came into the house and left his loaded gun in an anteroom. The lady's husband unfortunately chanced to see it, took it and blew his brains out on the spot.

A peculiarly interesting class of visions are those to which great artists have, at times, owed their greatest triumphs. Here, also, the line between mere delusion and real magic phenomena is often so faint as to escape attention. For artists must needs cultivate their imagination at the expense of other faculties, and naturally live more in an ideal world than in a real world. Preoccupied as they are, by the nature of their pursuits, with images of more than earthly beauty, they come easily to form ideals in their minds, which they endeavor to fix first upon their memory, and then upon[Pg 138] canvas or in marble, on paper or in rapturous words. Raphael Sanzio had long in vain tried to portray the Holy Virgin according to a vague ideal in his mind; at last he awoke one night and saw in the place where his sketch was hanging a bright light, and in the radiance the Mother of Christ in matchless beauty, and with supernatural holiness in her features. The vision remained deeply impressed upon his mind, and was ever after the original of which even his best Madonnas could only be imperfect copies. Benvenuto Cellini, when sick unto death, repeatedly saw an old man trying to pull him down into his boat, but as soon as his faithful servant came

and touched him, the hideous vision disappeared. The artist had evidently a picture of Charon and his Acherontic boat in his mind, which was thus reproduced in his feverish dreams. On another occasion, when he had long been in prison, and in despair contemplated suicide, an "unknown being" suddenly seized him and hurled him back to a distance of four yards, where he remained lying for hours half dead. In the following night a "fair youth" appeared to him and made him bitter reproaches on account of his sinful purpose. The same youthful genius appeared to him repeatedly when a great crisis approached in his marvelously adventurous life, and more than once revealed to him the mysteries of the future. (Goethe's "Benv. Cell." i. p. 375.) Poor Tasso had fearful hallucinations during the time when his mind was disordered, but above them all hovered, as it were, the[Pg 139] vision of a glorious Virgin surrounded by a bright light, which always comforted and probably alone saved him from self-destruction. Like Raphael, Dannecker also had long tried in vain to find perfect expression for his ideal of a Christ on the Cross; one night, however, he also saw the Saviour in a dream, and at once proceeded to form his model, from which was afterwards copied the well-known statue of transcendent beauty and power.

Paganini used to tell with an amusing air of assumed awe and reverence, that his mother had seen, a few days before his birth, an angel with two wings and of such dazzling splendor that she could not bear to look at the apparition. The heavenly messenger invited her to express a wish, and promised that it should be fulfilled. Thereupon she begged him on her knees to make her Nicolo a great violinist, and was told that it should be so. The vision—perhaps nothing more than a vivid form of earnest desire and fervent prayer—had, no doubt, a serious influence on the great artist, who was himself strangely susceptible to such impressions. (*Moniteur*, Sept. 30, 1860.)

Nothing can here be said, according to the purpose of these sketches, of the long series of visions vouchsafed to martyrs and saints; their history belongs to theology. But holy men have, independent of their religious convictions, often been as famous for their visions as for the piety of their hearts, and their achievements in the world. Loyola, for instance, with[Pg 140] his faculties perpetually strained to the utmost, and with his thoughts bent forever upon a grand and holy aim, could not well fail to rise to a state of psychic excitement which naturally produced impressive visions. Hence he continually saw strange sights and heard mysterious voices, the effect now of extreme despondency and now of restored confidence in God and in himself as the agent of the Most High. And yet these visions never interfered with the clearness of his judgment nor with his promptness and energy in acting. Luther, also, one of the most practical men ever called upon to act and to lead in a great crisis, had visions; he saw the Devil and held loud discussions with him; he suffered by his persecutions, and made great efforts to rid himself of his unwelcome guest, while engaged in his great work, the translation of the Bible. For he was, after all—and for very great and good purposes—only a man of his age, imbued with the universal belief in the personal existence and constant presence of Satan, and felt, at the same time, that he was engaged in a warfare upon the results of which depended not only the earthly welfare, but the eternal salvation of millions.

It is difficult to say whether Mohammed, who had undoubtedly visions innumerable, received any aid from his hallucinations in devising his new faith. Men of science tell us that he suffered of *Hysteria muscularis*, a disease not uncommon in men as well as in women, which produces periodical paroxysms and is characterized by[Pg 141] an alternate contraction and expansion of the muscles. When the attack came the prophet's lips and tongue would begin to vibrate, his eyes turned up, and the head moved automatically. If the paroxysms were very violent he fell to the

ground, his face turned purple, and he breathed with difficulty. As he frequently retained his consciousness he pretended that these symptoms were caused by angels' visits, and each attack was followed by a new revelation. The disease was the result of his early lawless life and of the freedom which he claimed, even in later years—pleading a special dispensation from on high as a divinely inspired prophet. It is not to be wondered at that the new religion, springing from such a source, and proclaimed amid the mountains and steppes of Arabia, which, according to popular belief, are all alive with djinns and demons, should be largely based upon visions and hallucinations.

The important part which visions hold in the history of the various religions of the earth lies beyond our present purpose; we know, however, that the records of ancient temples, of prophets, saints, and martyrs, and of later convents and churches, abound with instances of such so-called revelations from on high. They have more than once served at critical times to excite individuals and whole nations to make sublime efforts. One of the best known cases of the former class is that of Constantine the Great, who told Eusebius of Cæsarea, affirming his statement with a solemn oath, that he saw in 312, shortly before the decisive battle at Rome[Pg 142] against his formidable adversary Magentius, a bright cross in the heavens, surrounded by the words: *In hoc signo vinces*. But this vision stood by no means alone. He himself beheld, besides, in a dream during the following night, the Saviour, who ordered him to use in battle henceforth a banner like that which he had seen in his vision. Nazarius, a pagan, also speaks of a number of marvelous signs in the heavens seen in Gaul immediately before the emperor's great victory. Nor can it be doubted that this vision not only inspired Constantine with new hopes and new courage, enabling him to secure his triumph, but also induced him, after his success, to avow himself openly a convert to the faith of Christ.

The visions of that eminent man Swedenborg are too well known to require here more than a mere allusion. Beginning his intercourse with the supernatural world at the ripe age of forty-five, he soon gave himself up to it systematically, and felt compelled to make his daily conversations, as well as the revelations he received from time to time, duly known to the public. Thus he wrote with an evident air of firm conviction: "I had recently a conference with the Apostle Paul;" and at another time he assured a Würtemberg prelate, "I have conferred with St. Paul for a whole year, especially about the words in Romans iii. 28. Three times I have conversed with St. John, once with Moses, and a hundred times with Luther, when the latter confessed that he had taught *fidem solam* contrary to the[Pg 143] warning of an angel, and that he had stood alone when renouncing the pope. With angels, finally, I have held constant intercourse for the last twenty years, and still hold daily conversations."

Classic as well as Christian art, is indebted to visions for more than one signal success. On the other hand, they have as frequently been made to serve vile purposes, mainly by feeding superstition and supporting religious tyranny. We need only recall the terrible calamity caused by a wretched shepherd boy in France, who, in 1213, saw, or pretended to see, heavenly visions, ordering him to enlist his comrades, and with their aid, to rescue the Holy Land from the possession of infidels. Thousands of little children were seized by the contagious excitement, and leaving their home and their kindred, followed their youthful leader, unchecked by the authorities, because of the interpretation applied to the words of Jesus: "Suffer little children to come unto Me!" Not one of them ever reached Palestine, as all perished long before they had reached even Southern France.

It is not exactly a magic phenomenon, but certainly a most startling feature in visions, that the minds of many men should be able, by their own volition, to create images and forms so perfectly like those existing in the world around us, that the same minds are incapable of distinguishing where hallucination and reality touch each other. This faculty varies, of course, as much as other endowments: sometimes it produces nothing but[Pg 144] vague, shapeless lights or sounds; in other persons it is capable of calling up well-defined forms, and of causing even words to be heard and pain to be inflicted. During severe suffering in body or soul, it may become a comforter, and in the moment of passing through the valley of the shadow of death, it is apt to soothe the anguish, by visions of heavenly bliss, but to an evil conscience it may also appear as an avenger, by prefiguring impending judgment and condemnation. It is this influence on the lives of men, and their great moral importance, which lends to visions—and in a certain degree even to hallucinations—additional interest, and makes it our duty not to set them aside as mere idle phantoms, but to try to ascertain their true nature and final purpose. This is all the more necessary, as in our day visions are considered purely the offspring of the seer's own mental activity, a truth abundantly proven by the simple fact that blind or deaf people are quite as capable of having visions and hallucinations, as those who have the use of all their senses.

Thus these magic phenomena have, in an unbroken chain, accompanied almost all the great men who are known to history, from the earliest time to our own day. In modern times they have often been successfully traced to bodily and mental disorders; but this fact diminishes in no way the interest which they have for the student of magic. The great Pascal, who was once threatened with instant death by the upsetting of his carriage, henceforth saw perpetually an abyss by his[Pg 145] side, from which fiery flames issued forth; he could conceal it by simply placing a chair or a table between it and his eyes. In the case of the English painter Blake, who had visions of historic personages which appeared to him in idealized outlines, his periodical aberrations of mind were accepted as sufficient explanation. The bookseller Nicolai, of Berlin, on the contrary, who, like Beaumont, saw hundreds of men, women, and children accompanying him in his walks or visiting him in his chamber, found his ghostly company dependent on the state of his health. When he was bled or when leeches were applied, the images grew pale, and disappeared in part or dissolved entirely. A peculiarity of his case was, that he never saw visions in the dark, but all his phantasms appeared in broad daylight, or at night when candles had been brought in or a large fire was burning in the fireplace. Captain Henry Bell had been repeatedly urged by a German friend of his, Caspar von Sparr, to translate the Table-talk of Martin Luther, which, having been suppressed by an edict of the Emperor Rudolphus, had become very rare, and of which Sparr had sent him a copy, discovered by himself in a cellar where it had lain buried for fifty-two years. Captain Bell commenced the work; but abandoned it after a little while. A few weeks later a white-haired old man appeared to him at night, pulling his ear and saying: "What! will you not take time to translate the book? I will give you soon a place for it and the necessary leisure." Bell was much startled;[Pg 146] but nevertheless neglected the work. A fortnight after the vision he was arrested and lodged in the gate-house of Westminster, where he remained for ten years, of which he spent five in the translation of the work. (Beaumont, "Tractat.," p. 72.) Even religious visions have by no means ceased in modern times, and more than one remarkable conversion is ascribed to such agency. We do not speak of so-called miracles like that of the children of Salette in the department of the Isère, in 1849, or the recent revelations at Lourdes, and in Southern Alsace, which were publicly endorsed by leading men of the church, and have furnished rich material even for political demonstrations. The vision of Major Gardiner, also, who, just before committing a sinful action, beheld the Saviour and became a changed man, has

been so often published and so thoroughly discussed that it need not be repeated here. The conversion of young Ratisbone, in 1843, created at the time an immense sensation. He was born of Jewish parents, but, like only too many of his race, grew up to become a freethinker and a scoffer, rejecting all faiths as idle superstitions. One day he strolled into the church Delle Fratte in Rome, and while sunk in deep meditation, suddenly beheld a vision of the Virgin Mary, which made so deep an impression upon him that it changed the whole tenor of his life. He gave up the great wealth to which he had fallen heir, he renounced a lovely betrothed, and resolutely turning his back upon the world, he entered, as a novice, into a[Pg 147] Jesuit convent; thus literally forsaking all in order to follow Christ.

The magic phenomena accompanying visions, have, among nations of the Sclavic race, not unfrequently a specially formidable and repellent character, corresponding, no doubt, with the temperament and turn of imagination peculiar to that race. The Sclaves are apt to be ridden by invisible men, till they drop down in a swoon; they are driven by wild beasts to the graves of criminals, where they behold fearful sights, or they are forced to mingle with troops of evil spirits roving over the wide, waste steppes, and they invariably suffer from the sad effects of such visions, till a premature death relieves them after a few months. In Wallachia a special vision of the so-called Pickolitch is quite common, and has, in one case at least, been officially recorded by military authorities. A poor private soldier, who had already more than once suffered from visions, was ordered to stand guard in a lonely mountain pass, and forced by the rules of the service to take his place there, although he begged hard to be allowed to exchange with a brother soldier, as he knew he would come to grief. The officer in command, struck by the earnestness of his prayer, promised to lend him all possible assistance, and placed a second sentinel for his support close behind him. At half past ten o'clock the officer and a high civil functionary saw a dark figure rush by the house in which they were; they hastened at once to the post, where two shots had[Pg 148] fallen in rapid succession, and found the inner sentinel, the still smoking rifle in hand, staring fixedly at the place where his comrade had stood, and utterly unconscious of the approach of his superior. When they reached the outer post they found the rifle on the ground, shattered to pieces, and the heavy barrel bent in the shape of a scythe, while the man himself lay at a considerable distance, groaning with pain, for his whole body was so severely burnt that he died on the following day. The survivor stated that a black figure had fallen, as if from heaven, upon his comrade and torn him to pieces in spite of the two shots he had fired at it from a short distance, then it had vanished again in an instant. The matter was duly reported to headquarters, and when an investigation was ordered, the fact was discovered that a number of precisely similar occurrences had already been officially recorded. The vision is, of course, nothing more than a product of the excited imagination of the mountaineers, who lend the favorite shape of a "Pickolitch" to the frequent, bizarre-looking masses of fog and mist which rise in their dark valleys, hover over gullies and abysses, and driven by a sudden current of wind, fly upward with amazing rapidity, and thus seem to disappear in an instant. The apprehension of the poor sentinel, on the other hand, was a kind of clairvoyance produced by the combined influence of local tradition, the nightly hour and the dark pass, upon a previously-excited mind, while the vision of the two officers was a similar magic phe[Pg 149]nomena, the result of the impressions made upon them by the instant prayer of the victim, and a hot discussion about the reality of the "Prikolitch." The sentinel probably saw a weird shape and fired; the gun burst and killed him outright, setting fire to his clothes, a supposition strengthened by the statement that the poor fellow, anticipating a meeting with the spectre, had put a double charge into his rifle. The accident teaches once more that a mere denial of facts and a haughty smile at the idea of

visions profit us nothing, while a calm and careful examination of all the circumstances may throw much light upon their nature, and help, in the course of time, to extirpate fatal superstitions, like those of the "Prikolitch."

It is interesting to see how harmless and even pleasant are, in comparison, the visions of men with well-trained minds and kindly dispositions. The bookseller Nicolai entertained his phantom-guests, and was much amused, at times, by their conversation. Macnish ("Sleep," p. 194) tells us the same of Dr. Bostock, who had frequent visions, and of an elderly lady whom Dr. Alderson treated for gout, and who received friendly visits from kinsmen and acquaintances with whom she conversed, but who disappeared instantly when she rang for her maid. Another patient of Dr. Alderson's, who saw himself in the same manner surrounded by numbers of persons, even felt the blows which a phantom-carter gave him with his whip. Although in all these cases the visions disappeared after energetic[Pg 150] bleeding and purging, the phenomena were nevertheless real as far as they affected the patient, and have in every instance been fully authenticated and scientifically investigated. The well-known author, Macnish, himself was frequently a victim of this kind of self-delusion; he saw during an attack of fever fearful hellish shapes, forming and dissolving at pleasure, and during one night he beheld a whole theatre filled with people, among whom he recognized many friends and acquaintances, while on the stage he saw the famous Ducrow with his horses. As soon as he opened his eyes the scene disappeared, but the music continued, for the orchestra played a magnificent march from Aladdin, and did not cease its magic performance for five hours. The vision of the eye seems thus to have been under the influence of his will, but his hearing was beyond his control.

A very interesting class of visions accompanied by undoubted magic phenomena, and as frequent in our day as at any previous period, is formed by those which are the result of climatic and topographic peculiarities. We have already stated that the peculiar impression made upon predisposed minds by vast deserts and boundless wastes is frequently ascribed, by the superstitious dwellers near such localities, to the influence of evil spirits. Such a vision is the Ragl of Northern Africa, which occurs either after fatiguing journeys through the dry, hot desert, in consequence of great nervous excitement, or as one of the symptoms of[Pg 151] typhoid fever in native patients. Seeing and hearing are alike affected, the other senses only in rare cases. Ordinarily the eye sees everything immensely magnified or oddly changed; pebbles become huge blocks of stone, faint tracks in the hot sand change into broad causeways or ample meadows, and distant shadows appear as animals, wells, or mountain-dells. If the moon rises the vision increases in size and distinctness; the scene becomes animated, men pass by, camels follow each other in long lines, and troops are marching past in battalions. Then the ear also begins to succumb to the charm; the rustling of dry leaves becomes the sweet song of numerous birds; the wind changes into cries of despair, and the noise of falling sand into distant thunder. The brain remains apparently unaffected, for travelers suffering of the Ragl are able to make notes and record the symptoms, although the note-book looks to them like a huge album with costly engravings. There can be little doubt that the great afflux of blood to the eyes and the ears is the first cause of these phenomena, but the peculiar nature of the visions remains still a mystery. One striking peculiarity is their unvarying identity in men of the same race and culture; Europeans have their own hallucinations which are not shared by Africans; the former see churches, houses, and carriages, the latter mosques, tents, and camels, thus proving here also the fact that these delusions of the senses are produced in the mind and not in the outer world. Travelers who suffer from[Pg 152] hunger or from the dread effects of the simoon are naturally

more subject to the Ragl than others; the visions generally appear towards midnight and continue till six or seven o'clock in the morning, while during the day they are only seen in cases of aggravated suffering. Another peculiarity is the fact that these visions connect themselves only with small objects and moderate sounds; the gentle friction of a vibrating tassel on his camel's neck appeared to the great explorer Richardson like the clacking of a mill-wheel, but the words shouted by his companion sounded quite natural. Thus he saw in every little lichen a green garden spot, but the stars he discerned distinctly enough to direct his way by them even when suffering most intensely from the Ragl.

The Fata Morgana of the so-called Great Desert in Oregon, in which the waters of the Paducah, Kansas, and Arkansas lose themselves to a great extent, is a kindred affection. Here also phantoms of every kind are seen, gigantic horsemen, colossal buildings, and flitting fires; but the absence of heat makes the visions less frequent and less distinct. The Indians, however, like the Moors of Africa, dread these apparitions and ascribe them to evil spirits. These phenomena have besides a special interest, by proving how constantly in all these questions of modern magic facts are combined with mere delusions. The flitting fires, to which we alluded, for instance, are not mere visions, but real and tangible substances, the effect of gaseous effusions which are[Pg 153] quite frequent on these steppes. So it is also with the local visions peculiar to mountain regions, like the Little Gray Man of the Grisons in Switzerland and the gnomes of miners in almost all lands. The dwellers in Alpine regions acquire—or even inherit, it may be—a peculiar power of divination with regard to the weather; they feel instinctively, and without ever giving themselves the trouble of trying to ascertain the reason, the approach of fogs and mists, so dangerous to the welfare of their herds and their own safety. This presentiment is clothed by local traditions and their own vivid imaginations in the familiar shape of supernatural beings, and what was at first perhaps merely a form of speech, has gradually become a deep-rooted belief handed down from father to son. They end by really seeing—with their mind's eye—the rising mists and drifting fogs in the shape which they have so often heard mentioned, or give to rising gases, far down in the bowels of the earth, the form of familiar gnomes. These visions are hence not altogether produced by the imagination, but have, so to say, a grain of truth around which the weird form is woven.

A numerous class of visions, presenting some of the most interesting phenomena of this branch of magic, must be looked upon as the result of the innate desire to fathom the mystery of future life. The human heart, conscious of immortality by nature and assured of it by revelation, desires ardently to lift the veil which conceals the secrets of the life to come. Among other[Pg 154] means to accomplish this, the promise has often been exacted of dear friends, that they would, after death, return and make known their condition in the other world. Such compacts have been made from time immemorial—but so far their only result has been that the survivors have believed occasionally that they have received visits from deceased friends—in other words, that their state of great excitement and eager expectation has caused them to have visions. It remains true, after all, that from that bourne no traveler ever returns. Nevertheless, these visions have a deep interest for the psychologist, as they are the result of unconscious action, and thus display what thoughts dwell in our innermost heart concerning the future.[Pg 155]

V.

GHOSTS.

"Sunt aliquid manes; letum non omnia finit."

There are few subjects, outside of the vexed questions of Theology, on which eminent men of all nations and ages have held more varied views than so-called ghosts. The very term has been understood differently by almost every great writer who has approached the boundary line of this department of magic. The word which is now commonly used in order to designate any immaterial being, not made of the earth, earthy, or perhaps, in a higher sense, the "body spiritual" of St. Paul, was in the early days of Christianity applied to the visible spirits of deceased persons only. In the Middle Ages again, when everything weird and unnatural was unhesitatingly ascribed to diabolic agency, these phenomena, also, were regarded as nothing else but the Devil's work. Theologians have added in recent days a new subject of controversy to this vexed matter. The divines of the seventeenth and eighteenth century denied, of course, the possibility of a reappearance of the spirits of the departed, as they were in consistency bound to deny the existence of a purgatory, and yet, from purgatory alone were these spirits, accord[Pg 156]ing to popular belief, allowed to revisit the earth—heaven and hell being comparatively closed places. As the people insisted upon seeing ghosts, however, there remained nothing but to declare them to be delusions produced for malign purposes by the Evil One himself; and so decided, not many generations ago, the Consistory of Basle in an appeal made by a German mystic author, Jung Stilling. And yet it is evident that a number of eminent thinkers, and not a few of the most skeptic philosophers even, have believed in the occurrence of such visits by inmates of Sheol. Hugo Grotius and Puffendorf, whose far-famed worldly wisdom entitles their views to great respect, Machiavelli and Boccaccio, Thomasius and even Kant, all have repeatedly admitted the existence of what we familiarly call ghosts. The great philosopher of Königsberg enters fully into the subject. "Immaterial beings," he says, "including the souls of men and animals, may exist, though they must be considered as not filling space but only acting within the limits of space." He admits the probability that ere long the process will be discovered, by which the human soul, even in this life, is closely connected with the immaterial inmates of the world of spirits, a connection which he states to be operative in both directions, men affecting spirits and spirits acting upon men, though the latter are unconscious of such impressions "as long as all is well." In the same manner in which the physical world is under the control of a law of gravity, he believes the spiritual world to be ruled by[Pg 157] a moral law, which causes a distinction between good and evil spirits. The same belief is entertained and fully discussed by French authors of eminence, such as Des Mousseaux, De Mirville, and others. The Catholic church has never absolutely denied the doctrine of ghosts, perhaps considering itself bound by the biblical statement that "the graves were opened and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose and came out of the graves and went into the holy city and appeared unto many." (St. Matt. xxvii. 52.) Tertullian, St. Augustine, and Thomas de Aquinas, all state distinctly, as a dogma, that the souls of the departed can leave their home, though not at will, but only by special permission of the Almighty. St. Augustine mentions saints by whom he was visited, and Thomas de Aquinas speaks even of the return of accursed inmates of hell, for the purpose of terrifying and converting criminals in this world. The "Encyclopedia of Catholic Theology" (iv. p. 489) states that "although the theory of ghosts has never become a dogma of

the Holy Church, it has ever maintained itself, and existed in the days of Christ, who did not condemn it, when it was mentioned in his presence." (St. Matt. xiv. 26; St. Luke xxiv. 37.)

Calmet, the well-known Benedictine Abbot of Senon, in Lorraine, who was one of the most renowned theological writers of the eighteenth century, says (i. 17): "Apparitions of ghosts would be more readily understood if spirits had a body; but the Holy Church has decided that angels, devils and the spirits of the departed[Pg 158] are pure immaterial spirits. Since this question transcends our mental faculties, we must submit to the judgment of the Church, which cannot err." Another great theologian, the German Bengel, on the contrary, assumed that "probably the apparitions of the departed have a prescribed limit and then cease; they continue probably as long as all the ties between body and soul are not fully dissolved." This question of the nature of our existence during the time immediately following death, is, it is well known, one of the most vexed of our day, for while most divines of the Protestant Church assume an immediate decision of our eternal fate, others admit the probability of an intermediate state, and the Catholic Church has its well-known probationary state in purgatory. It may as well be stated here at once that the whole theory of ghosts is admissible only if we assume that there follows after death a period during which the soul undergoes, not an immediate rupture, but a slow, gradual separation from its body, accompanied by a similar gradual adaptation to its new mode of existence. Whether the spirit, during this time, is still sufficiently akin to earthy substances to be able to clothe itself into some material perceptible to the senses of living men, is of comparatively little importance. The idea of such an "ethereal body" is very old, and has never ceased to be entertained. Thus, in 1306, already Guido de la Tones, who died in Verona, appeared during eight days to his wife, his neighbors, and a number of devout priests, and declared in[Pg 159] answer to their questions that the spirits of the departed possessed the power to clothe themselves with air, and thus to become perceptible to living beings. Bayle also, in his article on Spinoza (note 2), advocates the possibility, at least, of physical effects being produced by agents whose presence we are not able to perceive by the use of our ordinary senses. Even so eminently practical a mind as Lessing's was bewildered by the difficulties surrounding this question, and he declared that "here his wits were at an end."

Another great German writer, Goerres, in his "Christian Mystic" (iii. p. 307), not only admits the existence of ghosts, but explains them as "the higher prototypal form of man freed from the earthy form, the spectrum relieved of its envelope, which can be present wherever it chooses within the prescribed limits of its domain." This view is, however, not supported by the experience of those who believe they have seen ghosts; for the latter appear only occasionally in a higher, purified form, resembling ethereal beings, as a mere whitish vapor or a shape formed of faint light; by far more generally they are seen in the form and even the costume of their earthy existence. The only evidence of really supernatural or magic powers accompanying such phenomena consists in the ineffable dread which is apt to oppress the heart and to cause intense bodily suffering; in the cold chill which invariably precedes the apparition, and in the profound and exquisitely painful emotion which is never again forgotten throughout life.[Pg 160]

As yet, the subject has been so little studied by candid inquiries, that there are but a few facts which can be mentioned as fully established. The form and shape under which ghosts appear, are the result of the imagination of the ghost seer only, whether he beholds angels or devils, men or animals. If his receptive power is highly developed, he will see them in their completeness, and discern even the minutest details; weak persons, on the other hand, perceive nothing more than a faint, luminous or whitish appearance, mere fragmentary and embryonic visions. These powers

of perception may, however, be improved by practice, and those who see ghosts frequently, are sure to discover one feature after another, until the whole form stands clearly and distinctly before their mind's eye. The ear is generally more susceptible than the eye to the approach of ghosts, and often warns the mind long before the apparition becomes visible. The noises heard are apt to be vague and ill defined, consisting mainly of a low whispering or restless rustling, a strange moving to and fro, or the blowing of cold air in various directions. Many sounds, however, are so peculiar, that they are never heard except in connection with ghosts, and hence, baffle all description. It need not be added, that the great majority of such sounds also exist only in the mind of the hearer, but as the latter is, in his state of excitement, fully persuaded that he hears them, they are to him as real as if they existed outside of his being. Nor are they always confined to the ghost seer. On the contrary,[Pg 161] the hearing of such sounds is as contagious as the seeing of such sights; and not only men are thus affected, and see and hear what others experience, but even the higher animals, horses and dogs, share in this susceptibility. When ghosts appear to speak, the voice is almost always engastrimantic, that is, the ghost seer produces the words himself, in a state of ecstatic unconsciousness, and probably by a kind of instinctive ventriloquism. To these phenomena of sight and hearing must be added, thirdly, the occasional violent moving about of heavy substances. Furniture seems to change its place, ponderous objects disappear entirely, or the whole surrounding scene assumes a new order and arrangement. These phenomena, as far as they really exist, must be ascribed to higher, as yet unexplained powers, and suggest the view entertained by many writers on the subject, that disembodied spirits, as they are freed from the mechanical laws of nature, possess also the power to suspend them in everything with which they come in contact. The last feature in ghost-seeing, which is essential, is the cold shudder, the ineffable dread, which falls upon poor mortal man, at the moment when he is brought into contact with an unknown world. Already Job said: "Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up" (iv. 14, 15). This sense of vague, and yet almost intolerable dread, resembles the agony of the dying man; it is perfectly natural, since the seeing of ghosts, that is, of disembodied spirits,[Pg 162] can only become possible by the more or less complete suspension of the ordinary life in the flesh. For a moment, all bodily functions are suspended, the activity of the brain ceases, and consciousness itself is lost as in a fit of fainting. This rarely happens without a brief instinctive struggle, and the final victory of an unseen and unknown power, which deprives the mind of its habitual mastery over the body, is necessarily accompanied by intense pain and overwhelming anguish.

Well-authenticated cases of the appearance of spirits of departed persons are mentioned in the earliest writings. Valerius Maximus relates in graphic words the experience of the poet Simonides, who was about to enter a vessel for the purpose of undertaking a long journey with some of his friends, when he discovered a dead body lying unburied on the sea-shore. Shocked by the impiety of the unknown man's friends, he delayed his departure to give to the corpse a decent funeral. During the following night, the spirit of this man appeared to him and advised him not to sail on the next day. He obeys the warning; his friends leave without him, and perish miserably in a great tempest. Deeply moved by his sad loss, but equally grateful for his own miraculous escape, he erected to the memory of his unknown friend a noble monument in verses, unmatched in beauty and pathos. Phlegon, also, the freedman of the Emperor Hadrian, has left us in his work, *De Mirabilibus*, one of the most touching instances of such ghost-seeing; it is the well-known story of Machates[Pg 163] and Philimion, which Goethe reproduced in his "Bride of Corinth." Nor must we forget the numerous examples of visions in dreams, by which the

Almighty chose to reveal His will to his beloved among the chosen people—a series of apparitions, which the Church has taken care to continue during the earlier ages, in almost unbroken succession from saint to saint. Pagans were converted by such revelations, martyrs were comforted, the wounded healed, and even an Emperor, Constantine, cured of leprosy, by the appearance of the two apostles, Peter and Paul.

The truth, which lies at the bottom of all such appearances, is probably, that ghostly disturbances are uniformly the acts of men, but of men who have ceased for a time to be free agents, and who have, for reasons to be explained presently, acquired exceptional powers. Thus, a famous jurist, Counselor Hellfeld, in Jena, was one evening on the point of signing the death warrant of a cavalry soldier. The subject had deeply agitated his mind for days, and before seizing his pen, he invoked, as was his custom in such cases, the "aid of the Almighty through His holy spirit." At that moment—it was an hour before midnight—he hears heavy blows fall upon his window, which sound as if the panes were struck with a riding-whip. His clerk also hears the blows distinctly, and begins to tremble violently. This apparent accident induces the judge to delay his action; he devotes the next day to a careful re-perusal of the evidence, and is now led to the conviction that the crime[Pg 164] deserves only a minor punishment. Ere the year has closed, another criminal is caught, and volunteers the confession that he was the perpetrator of the crime for which the soldier was punished. In that solemn moment, it was, of course, only the judge's own mind, deeply moved and worn out by painful work, which warned him in a symbolic manner not to be precipitate, and the very fact that the blows sounded as if they had been produced by a whip proved his unconscious association of the noise with the cavalry soldier. And yet he and his clerk believed and solemnly affirmed, that they had heard the mysterious blows! This dualism, which, as it were, divides man into two beings, one of whom follows and watches the other, while both are unconscious of their identity, is the magic element in these phenomena. This unconsciousness, proving—as in dreams—the inactivity of our reason, produces the natural effect, that we fancy all ghostly appearances are foolish, wanton and wicked. The fact is, moreover that they almost always proceed from a more or less diseased or disturbed mind, and acquire importance only in so far as it is our duty here also to eliminate truth from error. Thus only can we hope to counteract their mischievous tendency, and to prevent still stronger delusions from obtaining a mastery over weak minds. This is the purpose of a club formed in London in 1869, the members of which find amusement and useful employment in investigating all cases of haunted houses and other ghostly appearances.[Pg 165]

That the belief in ghostly disturbances is not a modern error, we see from St. Augustine, who already mentions the farm of a certain Hasparius as disquieted by loud noises till the prayer of a pious priest restored peace. The Catholic Church has a St. Cæsarius, who purified in like manner the house of the physician Elpidius in Ravenna, which was filled with evil spirits and only admitted the owner after he had passed through a shower of stones. Another saint, Hubertus, was himself annoyed by ghosts in his residence at Camens, and never succeeded in obtaining peace till he died, in 958. Wicked or interested men take, of course, but too readily advantage of the credulity of men and employ similar disturbances for personal purposes; such was the case with the ghosts that haunted the Council house in Constance and the palace at Woodstock in Cromwell's time. The case of a scrupulously conscientious Protestant minister in Germany, which created in 1719 a great excitement throughout the empire, is well calculated to show the real nature of a number of such ghostly disturbances. He had been called to the death-bed of a notorious sinner, a woman, who desired at the last moment to receive the comforts of religion.

Unfortunately he reached her house too late; she was already unconscious, and died in his presence, as he thought, unreconciled with her God and with himself, whom she had often insulted and cursed in life. Deeply disturbed he returned home, and after having dwelt upon the painful subject with intense anxiety for sev[Pg 166]eral days he began to hear footsteps in his house. Gradually they became more frequent; then he distinguished them clearly as a woman's step, and at last they were accompanied by the dragging of a gown. Watches were set, sand was strewn, dogs were kept in the house—but all in vain; no trace of man was found, and still the sounds continued. The unhappy man prayed day and night, and the noise disappeared for a fortnight. When he ceased praying they returned, louder than ever. He sternly bids the ghost desist, and behold! the ghost obeys. When he asks if it is a good angel or a demon, no answer is given; but the question: Art thou the Devil? finds an immediate reply in rapid steps up and down the house—for the poor man's mind was filled with the idea that such things can be done only by the Evil One. At last he summons all his remaining energy and in a tone of command he orders the ghost to depart and never to reappear. From that moment all disturbances cease—and very naturally, for the haunted, disturbed man, had fully recovered the command over himself; the dualism that produced all the spectral phenomena had ceased, and the restored mind accomplished its own cure. As these phenomena are thus produced from within, it appears perfectly natural also that they should be reported as occurring most frequently in the month of November. Religious minds and superstitious dispositions have brought this fact into a quaint connection with the approach of Advent-time, but the cause is probably purely physical; the[Pg 167] dark and dismal month with its dense fogs emblematic of coming winter predisposes the mind to gloomy thoughts and renders it less capable of resisting atmospheric influences.

A very general belief ascribes such disturbances, under the name of "haunted houses," to the souls of deceased persons who can find no rest beyond the grave. The series of ghost stories based upon this supposition begins with the account of Suetonius and continues unbroken to our day. Then it was the spirit of Caligula, which could not be quiet so long as his body, which had only been half burned, remained in that disgraceful condition. Night after night his house and his garden were visited by strange apparitions, till the palace was destroyed by fire and the emperor's sisters rendered the last honors to his remains.

Thus the disposition of modern inquiries to trace back all popular accounts of great events, all familiar anecdotes and fairy tales, and even proverbs and maxims, to the ancients, has been fully gratified in this case also. They were not only known to antiquity, but formed a staple of popular tales. Thus the younger Pliny tells us one which he had frequently heard related. At Athens there stood a large, comfortable mansion, which, however, was ill-reputed. Night after night, it was said, chains were heard rattling, first at a distance, and then coming nearer, till a pale, haggard shape was seen approaching, wearing beard and hair in long dishevelled locks and clanking the chains it bore on hands[Pg 168] and feet. The occupants of the house could not sleep, were terrified, sickened and died. Thus it came about that the fine building stood empty, year after year, and was at last offered for sale at a low price. About that time the philosopher Athenodorus came to Athens and saw the notice; he had his suspicions aroused by the small sum demanded for the house, inquired about the causes and rented the house. For he was a man of courage and meant to fathom the mystery.

On the evening of the first day he dismissed his servants and remained alone in the front room, writing and occupying himself, purposely, with grave and abstract questions, so as to allow no opening for his imagination. As soon as all was quiet around him the clanking and rattling of

chains begins; but he pays no heed and continues to write. The noise approaches and enters the room; as he looks up he sees the well-known weird shape before him. It beckons him, but he demands patience and writes on as before; then the ghost shakes his chains over his head and beckons once more imperatively. Now he rises, takes his lamp, and follows his visitor through the passages into a court-yard, where the ghost disappears. The philosopher pulls up some grass on the spot and marks the place. On the following day he appeals to the authorities to cause the place to be dug up; and when this is done, the bones of an old man, loaded with heavy chains, are found. From that time the house was left undisturbed, as if the departed had only desired to induce some intelligent person to[Pg 169] bestow upon him the honors of a decent burial, which among the ancients were held all-important. ("Letter to Sera," l. vii. 27.) The story told by Lucian ("Philopseudes," xxx.) is almost identical with that of Pliny. Here, also, a house in Corinth, once belonging to Eubatides, was left unoccupied, for the same reasons, and began to decay, when the Pythagorean, Arignotus, determined to ascertain the reality of these nightly appearances. He goes there after midnight, places his lamp on the floor, lies down and begins to read. Soon a horrible monster appears, black as night, and changes from one disgusting beast into another, till at last it yields to the stern command of the intrepid philosopher and disappears in a corner of the large room. When day breaks, workmen are brought in to take up the floor; a skeleton is found and decently interred, and from that day the house is left to its usual peace and quiet. ("Epist." l. vii. 27.) Plutarch, also, in his "Life of Cimon," states that the baths at Chæronea were haunted by the ghost of Damon, who had there found his death; the doors were walled up and the place forsaken, but up to his day no relief had been devised, and fearful sights and terrible sounds continued to render the place uninhabitable.

Nor are Eastern lands unacquainted with this popular belief. Egypt has its haunted houses in nearly every village, and in Cairo there are a great number, while in Tunis whole streets were abandoned to ghostly occupants. In Nankin a great mandarin owned a[Pg 170] spacious building which he could neither occupy himself nor rent to others, because of its evil reputation. At last the Jesuit Riccius, a missionary, offered to take it for his order; the fathers moved into it, conquered the ghosts by some means best known to themselves, and not only obtained a good house but great prestige with the natives for their triumph over the spirits (C. Hasart. *Hist. Eccles. Sinica*, p. 4, ch. iii.).

The same singular belief is not only met with in every age and among the most enlightened nations, but even in our own century a similar case occurred and is well authenticated. The Duke Charles Alexander of Würtemberg of unholy memory, died at the town of Ludwigsburg, perhaps by murder. For years afterwards the palace was the scene of most violent disturbances; even the sentinels, powerful and well-armed men, were bodily lifted up and thrown across the parapet of the terrace. At other times the whole building appeared to be filled with people; doors were opened and closed, lights were seen in the apartments and dim figures flitted to and fro. Large detachments of troops under the command of officers, specially selected for the purpose, were ordered to march through the palace more than once, on such occasions, but never discovered a trace of human agency (Kerner. *Bilder*. p. 143). Even the great Frederick of Prussia, a man whose thoroughly skeptical mind might surely be supposed to have been free from all superstition, was once forced to admit his inability to explain by natural causes an occurrence of[Pg 171] the kind. A Catholic priest in Silesia lost his cook, who had been specially dear to him; her ghost—as it was called—continued to haunt the house, and, most strange of all, not in order to disturb its peace, but to perform the usual domestic service. The floors were swept, the fires

made, and linen washed, all by invisible hands. Frederick, who accidentally heard of the matter, ordered a captain and a lieutenant of his guard to investigate it; they were received by the beating of drums and then allowed to witness the same household performances. When the grim old captain broke out in a fearful curse, he received a severe box on the ears and retreated utterly discomfited. Upon his report to the king the house was pulled down and a new parsonage erected at some distance from the place. The occurrence is mentioned in many historical works and quoted without comment even by the great historian Menzel. Another striking case of a somewhat different character, was fully reported to the Colonial Office in London. The scene was a large vault in the island of Barbadoes, hewn out of the live rock and accessible only through a huge iron door, fastened in the usual way by strong bolts and a lock, the key to which was kept at the Government House. During the year 1819 it was opened four times for purposes of interment, and each time it was observed that all the coffins in the vault had been violently thrown about. The Governor, Lord Combermere, went himself, accompanied by his staff and a number of officers, to examine the place, and[Pg 172] found the vault itself in perfect order and without a trace of violence. He ordered the door to be closed with cement and placed his seal upon the latter, an example followed by nearly all the bystanders. Eight months later, the 28th of April, 1820, he had the vault opened in the presence of a large company of friends and within sight of a crowd of several thousands. The cement and the seals were found to be perfect and uninjured; the sand which had been carefully strewn over the floor of the vault showed no footmark or sign whatever, but the coffins were again thrown about in great confusion. One, of such weight that it required eight men to move it, was found standing upright, and a child's coffin had been violently dashed against the wall. A carefully drawn up report with accompanying drawings was sent home, but no explanation has ever been discovered. Scientific men were disposed to ascribe the disturbance to earthquakes, but the annals of the island report none during those years; there remains, however, the possibility that the examination of the vault was after all imperfect, and that the sea might have had access to it through some hidden cleft. In that case an unusually high tide might very well have been the invisible agent.

Even the Indian of our far West cherishes the same superstitious belief, and in his lodge on the slopes of the Rocky Mountains, he hears mysterious knockings. To him they are the kindly warning of a spirit, whom he calls the Great Bear, which announces some great calamity.[Pg 173]

That certain localities seem to be frequented by ghosts, that is, to be haunted, with special preference, must be ascribed to the contagious nature of such mental affections as generally produce these phenomena. This is, moreover, by no means limited, as is commonly believed, to Northern regions, where frequent fogs and dense mists, short days and long nights, together with sombre surroundings and awe-inspiring sounds in nature, combine to predispose the mind to expect supernatural appearances. Thus, for instance, fair Suabia, one of the most favored portions of Germany, sweet and smiling in its fertile plains, and by no means specially gruesome, even in the most secluded parts of the Black Forest, teems with haunted localities. Dr. Kerner's home, Weinsberg, enjoyed ghostly visits almost in every house; the neighborhood was similarly favored, and even in the open country there are countless peasants' cottages and noblemen's seats, which are frequented by ghosts. One of the most attractive estates in Würtemberg was purchased in 1815 by a distinguished soldier, whose dauntless courage had caused him to rise rapidly from grade to grade under the eye of the great Napoleon. Soon after his arrival his wife was aroused every night by a variety of mysterious noises, rising from weird, low whinings to terrific explosions. The colonel also heard them, and tried his best to ascertain

the cause. Night after night, moreover, the great castle clock, which went perfectly well all day long, struck at wrong hours, and was found all wrong in the morning. The disturbing[Pg 174] powers soon became personal; for one night, when the colonel, sitting at the supper table, and hearing the usual sounds, said angrily, "I wish the ghost would make himself known!" a fearful explosion took place, knocking down the speaker and bringing all the inmates of the house to the room. Search was immediately instituted, and the main weight of the great clock was discovered to be missing. A new weight had to be ordered, and only long afterwards the old one was found wedged in between two floors above the clock. Nor were the disturbances confined to the castle: at midnight the horses in the stable became restless and almost wild, tearing themselves loose and sweating till they were covered with white foam. One night the colonel went to the stable, mounted his favorite charger, who had borne him in the din and roar of many a battle, and awaited the striking of midnight. Instantly the poor animal began to tremble, then to rear and kick furiously, until his master, famous as a good horseman, could hold him in no longer, and was carried around the stable by the maddened horse so as to imperil his life. After an hour, the poor creatures began to calm down, but stood trembling in all their limbs; the colonel's own horse succumbed to the trial and died in the morning. A new stable had to be built, which remained free from disturbances.

By far the most remarkable and, strange enough, at the same time the best authenticated of all accounts of disturbances caused by recently departed friends is[Pg 175] found in a memoir written by the sufferer herself, and addressed to the famous Baron Grimm under the pseudonym of Mr. Meis. Through the latter the story reached Goethe, who at once appropriated it in all its details, and merely changing the name of the principal to Antonelli, inserted it in his "Conversations of German Emigrants." The same event is fully related in the "Memoirs of the Margravine of Anspach" as "a story which at that time created a great sensation in Paris, and excited universal curiosity." But even greater authority yet is given to this account by the fact that it was officially recorded in the police reports of Paris, from which it has been frequently extracted for publication. Mdlle. Hippolyte Clairon makes substantially the following statements: "In the year 1743 my youth and my success on the stage procured for me much attention from young fops and elderly profligates, among whom, however, I found frequently a few better men. One of these, who made a deep impression upon me, was a Mr. S., the son of a merchant from Brittany, about thirty years old, fair of features, well made, and gifted with some talent for poetry. His conversation and his manners showed that he had received a superior education, and that he was accustomed to good society, while his reserve and bashfulness, which prevented him from allowing his attachment to be seen, made him all the dearer to me. When I had ascertained his discretion, I permitted him to visit me, and gave him to understand that he might call himself my friend. He[Pg 176] took this patiently, seeing that I was still free and not without tender feelings, and hoping that time might inspire me with a warmer affection. Who knows what might have happened! But I used to question him closely, both from curiosity and from prudence, and his candid answers destroyed his prospects; for he confessed that, dissatisfied with his modest station in life, he had sold his property in order to live in Paris in better society, and I did not like this. Men who are ashamed of themselves are not, it seems to me, calculated to inspire others with respect. Besides, he was of a melancholy and dissatisfied temper, knowing men too well, as he said, not to despise and avoid them. He intended to visit no one but myself, and to induce me also to see no one but him. You may imagine how I disliked such ideas. I might have been held by garlands, but did not wish to be bound with chains. From that moment I saw that I must disappoint his hopes, and gradually withdrew from his society. This caused him a severe illness,

during which I showed him all possible attention. But my steady refusal to do more for him only deepened the wound, and at the same time the poor young man had the misfortune of being stripped of nearly all his property by his faithless brother, to whom he had intrusted the sale of all he owned, so that he saw himself compelled to accept small sums from me for the payment of his daily food and the necessary medicines.

"At last he recovered part of his property, but his[Pg 177] health was ruined; and as I thought I was rendering him a real service by widening the distance between us, I refused henceforth to receive his letters and his visits.

"Thus matters went on for two years and a half, when he died. He had sent for me, wishing to enjoy the happiness of seeing me once more in his last moments, but my friends would not allow me to go. He had no one near him except his servants and an old lady, who had of late been his only companion. Our lodgings were far apart: his near the Chaussée-d'Antin, where only a few houses had as yet been built, and mine near the Abbey of St. Martin. My daily guests were an agent, who attended to all my professional duties, Mr. Pipelet, well known and beloved by all who knew him, and Rosely, one of my fellow-comedians, a kind young man full of wit and talent. We had modest little suppers, but we were merry and enjoyed ourselves heartily. One evening I had just been singing several pretty airs which seemed to delight my friends, when the clock struck eleven, and at the same moment an extremely sharp cry was heard. Its plaintive sound and long duration amazed everybody; I fainted away and remained for nearly a quarter of an hour unconscious.

"My agent was in love with me and so mad with jealousy that when I recovered, he overwhelmed me with reproaches, and said the signals for my interview were rather loud. I told him that as I had the right to receive when and whom I chose, no signals were[Pg 178] needed, and this cry had surely been heart-rending enough to convince him that it announced no sweet moments. My paleness, my tremor, which lasted for some time, my tears flowing silently and almost unconsciously, and my urgent request that somebody would stay up with me during the night, all these signs convinced him of my innocence. My friends remained with me, discussing the fearful cry, and determining finally to station guards around the house.

"Nevertheless the dread sound was repeated night after night; my friends, all the neighbors, and even the policemen who were stationed near us, heard it distinctly; it seemed to be uttered immediately under my window, where nothing could ever be seen. There was no doubt entertained as to the person for whom it was intended, for whenever I supped out, no cry was heard; but frequently after my return, when I entered my room and inquired about it of my mother and my servants, it suddenly pierced the air anew. Once the president of the court, at whose house I had been entertained, proposed to see me home in safety; at the moment when he wished me good-night at the door, the cry was heard right between us, and the poor man had to be lifted into his carriage more dead than alive.

"Another time my young companion, Rosely, a clever, witty man, who believed in nothing in heaven or on earth, was riding with me in my carriage on our way to a friend who lived in a distant part of the city. We[Pg 179] were discussing the fearful torment to which I was exposed, and he, laughing at me, at last declared he would never believe it unless he heard it with his own ears, and defied me to summon my lover. I do not know how I came to yield, but instantly the cry was repeated three times, and with overwhelming fierceness. When our carriage reached the

house, the servants found us both lying unconscious on the cushions, and had to summon assistance before we recovered. After this I heard nothing for several months, and began to hope that all was over. But I was sadly mistaken.

"The members of the king's troop of comedians had all been ordered to appear at Versailles, in honor of the dauphin's marriage, and as we were to spend three days there, lodgings had been provided. It so happened, however, that a friend of mine, Mme. Grandval, had been forgotten, and seeing her trouble, I at last offered her, towards three o'clock in the morning, to share my room, in which there were two beds. This forced me to take my maid into my own bed, and as she was in the act of coming, I said to her: 'Here we are at the end of the world, the weather is abominable, and the cry would find it hard to follow us here!' At that moment it resounded close to us; Mme. Grandval jumped up terribly frightened, and ran through the whole house, waking everybody, and keeping us all in such a state of excitement that not an eye was closed the whole night. Seven or eight days later, as I was chatting merrily with a number of friends, at the striking of the hour, a shot[Pg 180] was heard, coming apparently through my window. We all heard it and saw the fire, but the pane was not broken. Everybody thought at once of an attempt to murder me, and some friends hastened instantly to the Chief of Police. Men were immediately sent to search the houses opposite, and for several days and nights the street was strictly guarded by a number of soldiers; my own house was searched from roof to cellar, and friends came in large companies to assist in watchings: nevertheless, the shot fell night after night at the same hour, for three months, with unfailing accuracy. No clue was found and no sign was seen save the sound of the shot and the sight of the fire. Daily reports of the occurrence were sent to the headquarters of the police, new measures were continually devised and applied, but the authorities were baffled as well as all who tried to fathom the mystery. I became at last quite accustomed to the disturbance, and was in the habit of speaking of it as the doing of a *bon diable*, because he contented himself so long a time with jugglers' tricks; but one night as I had stepped through the open window out upon a balcony, and was standing there with my agent by my side, the shot suddenly fell again and knocked us both back into the room, where we fell down as if dead. When we recovered our consciousness, we got up, and after some hesitation, confessed to each other that our ears had been severely boxed, his on the right side and mine on the left, whereupon we gave way to hearty laughter. The next night was quiet, but on the following day I[Pg 181] was riding with my maid to a friend's house, where I had been invited to meet some acquaintances. As we passed through a certain part of the city, I recognized the houses in the bright moonlight, and said jestingly: 'This looks very much like the part of town where poor S. used to live.' At the same moment a near church clock struck eleven, and instantly a shot was fired at us from one of the buildings, which seemed to pass through our carriage. The coachman thought we had been attacked by robbers, and whipped his horses to escape; I knew what it meant, but still felt thoroughly frightened, and reached the house in a state little suited for social enjoyment. This was, however, the last time my unfortunate friend used a gun.

"In place of the firing there came now a loud clapping of hands, with certain modulations and repetitions. This sound, to which I had become accustomed on the stage by the kindness of my friends, did not disturb me as much as my companions. They would station themselves around my door and under my window; they heard it distinctly, but could not see a trace of any person. I do not remember how long this continued; but it was followed by the singing of a sweet, almost heavenly melody, which began at the upper end of the street and gradually swelled till it reached my house, where it slowly expired. Then the disturbance ceased altogether.

"The only light that was ever thrown upon the mystery came from an old lady who called on me on the[Pg 182] pretext of wishing to see my house which I had offered for rent. I was very much struck by her venerable appearance and her evident emotion. I offered her a chair and sat down opposite to her, but was for some time unable to say a word. At last she seemed to gather courage and told me that she had long wished to make my acquaintance, but had not dared to come so long as I was constantly surrounded by hosts of friends and admirers. At last she had happened to see my advertisement and availed herself of the opportunity in order to see me—and to visit my house, which had a deep though melancholy interest in her eyes. I guessed at once that she was the faithful friend who alone remained by the bedside of poor S., when he was prostrated by a fatal disease and refused to see anybody else. For months, she now told me, he had spoken of nothing save of myself, looking upon me now as an angel and now as a demon, but utterly unable to keep his thoughts from dwelling uninterruptedly upon the one subject which filled his mind and his heart alike. I tried to explain to the old lady how I had fully appreciated his good qualities and noble impulses, finding it, however, impossible to fall in with his peculiar views of society and to promise, as he insisted I should do, to forsake all I loved for the purpose of living with him in loneliness and complete retirement. I told her, also, that when he sent for me to see him in his last moments, my friends prevented my going, and that I felt myself that the sight of his death under such circum[Pg 183]stances would have been dangerous in the extreme to my peace of mind, besides being utterly useless to the dying man. She admitted the force of my reasoning, but repeated that my refusal had hastened his end and deprived him at the last moment of all self-control. In this state of mind, when a few minutes before eleven, the servant had entered and assured him in answer to his passionate inquiry, that no one had come, he had exclaimed: 'The heartless woman! She shall gain nothing by her cruelty, for I will pursue her after death as I have pursued her during life!' and with these words on his lips he had expired."

The impression produced by this thoroughly authenticated recital is a strong argument in favor of a continued connection after death of the human soul with the world in which we live. There was a man whose whole existence was absorbed by one great and all-pervading passion; it brought ruin to his body and disabled his mind from correcting the vagaries of his fancy. He died in this state, with a sense of grievous wrong and intense thirst of revenge uppermost in his mind. Then follow a number of magic phenomena, witnessed, for several years, by thousands of attached friends and curious observers, defying the vigilance of soldiers and the acuteness of police agents. These disturbances, at first bearing the stamp of willful annoyance, gradually assume a milder form, as if expressive of softening indignation; they become weaker and less frequent, and finally cease altogether, suggestive of the[Pg 184] peace which the poor erring soul had at last found, by infinite mercy and goodness, when safely entering the desired haven.

On the other hand—for contrasts meet here as well as elsewhere—these phenomena have been frequently ascribed to purely physical causes, and in a number of cases the final explanation has confirmed this suggestion. A hypochondriac artist, for instance, was nightly disturbed by a low but furious knocking in his bed, which was heard by others as well as by himself. He prayed, he caused priests to come to his bedside, he had masses read in his behalf, but all remained in vain. Then came a plain, sensible friend, who, half in jest and half in earnest, covered his big toe with a brass wire which he dipped into an alkaline solution, and behold, the knockings ceased and never returned! (Dupotel, "Animal Magn.") In another case a somnambulistic woman frightened herself as well as others by most violent knockings whenever she was disappointed or thwarted;

her physician, suspecting the cause, finally gave her antispasmodic remedies, and it soon appeared that in her nervous spasms the muscles had been vibrating forcibly enough to produce these disturbances. Since these discoveries it has been found that almost anybody may produce such knockings—which stand in a suspicious relationship to spirit-rappings—by exerting certain muscles of the leg; some men, who have practised this trick for scientific purposes, like Professor Schiff, of Florence, are able to imitate almost all the[Pg 185] various knockings generally ascribed to ghosts and spirits. The public performances of Mr. Chauncey Burr, in New York, gave very striking illustrations of this power, and a Mr. Shadrach Barnes rapped with his toes to perfection.

In a large number of cases such phenomena appear in connection with persons who suffer of some nervous disease, and then the knockings are, of course, produced unconsciously, and may be accompanied by evidences of exceptional powers. It need not be added, however, that the two symptoms are not necessarily of the same nature; generally the mechanical knockings precede the development of ecstatic visions. A girl of eleven years, the child of humble Alsatian parents, presented, in 1852, this succession of symptoms very strikingly. The child had a habit of falling asleep at all hours; at once mysterious knockings began to perform a dance or a march, and continued daily for more than an hour. After some time the poor girl began, also, to talk in her sleep, and to converse with the knocking agent. She would order him to beat a tattoo, or to play a quickstep, and immediately it was done. The directions of bystanders, even when not uttered but merely formed earnestly in their mind, were obeyed in like manner. Finally the child, getting no doubt worse and unmercifully excited by the crowds of curious people who thronged the house, began to admonish her audience, and to preach and pray; during these exhortations no knockings were heard, but she became clairvoyant and[Pg 186] recognized all the persons present, even with her eyes closed. She fancied that a black man with a red shawl produced the knockings and delivered the speeches. Her clairvoyance became at last so striking that her case excited the deepest interest of persons in high social position, and several physicians examined it with great care. Her disease was declared to be neurosis cœliaca ("Magicon," v. 274).

A very peculiar and utterly inexplicable phenomenon belonging to this class of ghostly appearances is the complete removal of persons by an unseen power. The idea of such occurrences must have been current among the Jews, for when "there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire ... and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (II. Kings ii. 11), the sons of the prophets did not at once resign themselves, but sent fifty strong men to seek him, "lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley" (v. 16). In the New Testament the same mysterious removal is mentioned in the case of Philip, after his interview with the Ethiopian, whom he baptized. "The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more," and "Philip was found at Azotus" (Acts viii. 39, 40). What in these cases was done by divine power, is said to be occasionally the work of an unknown and unseen force. Generally, no doubt, men or children lose themselves by accident, either when they are already from illness or other cause in a state of[Pg 187] semi-consciousness, or when they become so bewildered and frightened by the accident itself, that they fancy they must have been carried away by a mysterious power. The best authenticated case is reported in Beaumont (p. 65). An Irish steward, crossing a field, saw in it a large company feasting, and was invited to join their meal. One of them, however, warned him in a whisper not to accept anything that should be offered. Upon his refusal to eat, the table vanished and the men were seen dancing to a merry music. He was again invited to join, and when he refused, all

disappeared, and he found himself alone. He hurried home thoroughly terrified, and fainted away in his room. During the night he dreamt—or really saw—that one of the mysterious company appeared at his bedside and announced to him that if he dare leave the house on the following day, he would be carried away. He remained at home till the evening, when, thinking himself safe, he stepped across the threshold. Instantly his companions saw him, with a rope around his body, hurried away so fast that they could not follow. At last they meet a horseman whom they request by signs to arrest the unhappy victim; he seizes the rope and receives a smart blow, but rescues the steward. Lord Orrery desired to see the man, and when the latter presented himself before the earl, he reported that another nightly visitor had threatened him as before. He was, thereupon, placed in a large room under the guard of several stout men; a number of distinguished[Pg 188] persons, two bishops among them, went constantly in and out. In the afternoon he was suddenly lifted into the air; a famous boxer, Greatrix, who had been specially engaged to guard him, and another powerful man, seized him by the shoulders, but he was dragged from their grasp and for some time carried about high above their heads, till at last he fell into the arms of some of his keepers. During the night the same apparition stood once more by his bed-side, inviting him to drink of a gray porridge, which would cure him of all ills and protect him against further violence. He suffered himself to be persuaded, when the visitor made himself known as a former friend who had to attend those mysterious meetings in punishment of the dissolute life he had led upon earth, and who now wished to save another unhappy fellow-being from a like sad fate. At the same time he reminded him of his neglect to pray, and then disappeared. The steward speedily recovered from his fright, and was no further molested. There can be little doubt that the man was ill at ease in body and in conscience, and that this double burden was too heavy to bear for his mind; his thoughts became disordered, till he felt an apparently external power stronger than his own will, and thus not only imagined strange visions, but actually obeyed erratic impulses of his diseased mind, as if they were acts of violence from without.

A favorite pastime of these pseudo-ghosts is the throwing of stones at the buildings or even into the[Pg 189] rooms of those whom they wish to annoy. Good Cotton Mather loved to tell stories of such perverse proceedings, and states at length the sufferings of George Walton, at Portsmouth, in 1682. Invisible hands threw such a hailstorm of stones against his house, that the door was burst open, although the inhabitants, when hit by the stones, only felt a slight touch. Then the stones began to fly about inside, and to destroy the window-panes from within; when picked up by some of the witnesses, they proved to be burning hot; they were marked and placed upon a table, whereupon they commenced to fly about once more. It is characteristic of the whole proceeding that the only person really injured by the operation was the owner of the house, a quaker! The learned author delights also in recitals of children who were plagued by evil spirits, having forks and knives, pins and sharp scissors stuck into their backs, and whose food, at the moment when it was to be carried from the plate to the mouth, flew away, leaving yarn, ashes, and vile things to reach the palate! At other times the disturbance assumes a somewhat more dignified form, and appears as the ringing of bells. Thus Baxter tells us of a house at Colne Priory, in Essex, where, for a time, every morning at two o'clock a large bell was heard, while in the parish of Wilcot, a smaller bell waked the vicar night after night with its tinkling, and yet could not be heard outside of the dwelling. Physicians know very well how readily the pressure of blood to certain vessels in the[Pg 190] head produces the impression of the ringing of bells, and experience tells us how easily men are made to believe that they see or hear what others assure them is seen or heard by everybody. Even the great John Wesley seems not to have been fully

convinced of the purely natural character of such disturbances, when they annoyed his venerable father at Epworth Rectory; and Dr. Priestley, a calm and cautious writer, says of these phenomena: "It is perhaps the best-authenticated and the best-told story of the kind that is anywhere extant, on which account, and to exercise the ingenuity of some speculative person, I thought it not undeserved of being published." It seems that in 1716 the rectory became the scene of strange disturbances, which were at first ascribed to one of the minister's enemies, Jeffrey. The inmates heard an incessant walking about, sighing and groaning, cackling and crowing; a hand-mill was set whirling around by invisible hands, and the Amen! with which Wesley's father ended the family prayer was accompanied by a noise like thunder. Even the faithful watchdog was disturbed and his instinct overawed, for he sought refuge with men, and barked furiously, till his excitement rose to a state resembling madness, he even anticipated the coming of the disturbance, and announced it by his intense agitation.

The subject is one of extreme difficulty because of the large number of cases in which all such disturbances have been clearly traced to the agency of dissatisfied servants, hidden enemies, or envious neighbors,[Pg 191] whose sole purpose was a desire to drive the occupant from his house, or to diminish its value. It is characteristic of human nature that the cunning and the skill displayed on such occasions even by ignorant servants and awkward rustics are perfectly amazing, a fact which proves anew the assertion of old divines, that the Devil is vastly better served than the Lord of Heaven. Even the best authenticated case of such mysterious disturbances, Kerner's so-called Seeress of Prevorst, is not entirely free from all suspicion. Mrs. Hauffe, a lady of delicate health, great nervous irritability, and a mind which was, to say the least, not too well balanced, became the patient of Dr. Justinus Kerner, in southern Germany. Besides her mysterious power to reveal unknown things, to read the future, and to prescribe for herself and others, of which mention has been made before; she was also pursued by every variety of strange noises. Plates and glasses, tables and chairs were violently thrown about in the house in which she lived; a medicine phial rose slowly into the air and had to be brought back by one of the bystanders, and an easy-chair was lifted up to the ceiling, but came down again quite gently. The suffering woman was the only one who knew the cause of these phenomena; she ascribed them all to a dark spirit, Belon's companion, who appeared to her as a black column of smoke, with a hideous head, and whose approach oppressed even some of the bystanders—especially the patient's sister. He was not content with[Pg 192] disturbing Mrs. Hauffe only, but carried his wantonness even into the homes of distant friends and kinsmen. A pious minister, who frequently visited the poor sufferer, was contagiously affected by the ill-fated atmosphere of her house; night after night he was waked up, by a "bright spirit," who coughed and sighed and sobbed in his presence, till a fervent prayer drove him away; if the poor divine, however, prayed only faintly or entertained doubts in his heart, the spirit mocked him with increased energy. Later even the minister's wife succumbed, saw the same luminous appearances and heard the same mysterious noises, till the whole matter was suddenly brought to an end by an amulet! To this class of occurrences belongs also the experience of the Rev. Dr. Phelps of Stratford, Connecticut. One fine day he found, upon returning from church, that all the doors of his house, which he had carefully locked, were open and everything in the lower rooms in a state of boundless confusion. Nothing, however, had been stolen. In the upper story a room was found to be occupied by eight or ten persons diligently reading in an open Bible, which each one held close to his face. Upon examination these readers were discovered to be bundles of clothes carefully and most cunningly arranged so as to represent living beings. Everything was cleared away and the room was locked; but in three minutes, the clothing, which had been put aside,

disappeared, and when the door was opened the same scene was presented. For seven long months the house was haunted[Pg 193] by most extraordinary phenomena; noises of every kind were heard by day as well as by night; utensils and window-panes were broken before the eyes of numerous witnesses by invisible hands, and the son of the house, eleven years old, was bodily lifted up and carried away to some distance. The most searching inquiry led to no result, until at last Dr. Phelps, almost in despair, applied to some spiritualists, and in consequence of the hints he received was enabled to bring the disturbances to a speedy end (*Rechenberg*, p. 58).

Stone-throwing seems to be a favorite amusement with Eastern ghosts also; at least we are told that it is quite frequent in the western part of the Island of Java, where the Sunda people live amid gigantic mountains and still active volcanoes. They believe in good and evil spirits, and are firmly convinced that constant intercourse is kept up between earth-born men and heavenly beings. The whole Indian Archipelago is filled with the latter, and hence, the throwing of stones, sand and gravel, by invisible hands, has a name of its own, it is called Gundarua. Some thirty years ago, a German happened to be Assistant-Resident at Sumadang, in the service of the Dutch government. His wife had taken a fancy to a native child ten years old, who was allowed to go in and out the house at will. One morning during the German's absence, the child's white dress was found to be soiled all over with red betel-juice, and at the moment when her patroness made this discovery, a stone fell apparently from the ceiling, at her feet. The same phe[Pg 194]nomenon was repeated over and over again, till the lady, in her distress, appealed to a neighboring native sovereign, who promised his assistance. He sent immediately a large force of armed men, who surrounded the house and watched the room; nevertheless, the red spots reappeared and stones fell as before. Towards evening, a Mohammedan mufti, of high rank, was sent for; but he had scarcely opened his Koran, to read certain sentences for the purpose of exorcising the demons, when the sacred book was hurled to one side and the lamp to another. The lady took the child to the prince's residence to spend the night there, and no disturbance occurred. But when her husband, for whom swift messengers had been sent out, returned on the following day, the same trouble occurred; the child was spit at with betel-juice and stones kept falling from on high. Soon the report reached the Governor-General at Breitenzorg, who thereupon sent a man of great military renown, a Major Michiels, to investigate the matter. Once more the house was surrounded by an armed force, even the neighboring trees were carefully guarded, and the major took the little girl upon his knees. In spite of all these precautions, her dress was soon covered with red spots, and stones flew about as before. No one, however, was injured. They were gathered up, proved to be wet or hot, as if just picked up in the road, and at night filled a huge box. The same process continued, when a huge sheet of linen had been stretched from wall to wall, so as to form an inner ceiling under the real ceiling; and[Pg 195] now not only stones, but also fruit from the surrounding trees, freshly gathered, and mortar from the kitchen fell into the newly formed tent. At the same time the furniture was repeatedly disturbed, tumblers and wineglasses tossed about, and marks left on the large mirror as if a moist hand had been passed over the surface. The marvelous occurrences were duly reported to the home government, and the king, William II., ordered that no pains should be spared to clear up the matter. But no explanation was ever obtained; only the fact was ascertained that similar phenomena had been repeatedly observed in other parts of the island also, and were considered quite ordinary occurrences by the natives. Certain families, it may be added, claim to have inherited from their ancestors the power to make themselves invisible, a gift which is almost invariably accompanied by the Gundarua; as these native families gradually die out, the symptoms of the latter also disappear more and more. There is no doubt that here, as in the Russian *poganne* (cursed places

which are haunted by ghosts), the belief in such appearances, bequeathed through long ages from father to son, has finally obtained a force which renders it equal to reality itself. Reason is not only biased, but actually held bound; the mind is wrought up to a state of excitement in which it ceases to see clearly, and finally visions assume an overwhelming force, which ends in symptoms of what is called magic. The same law applies, for instance, to the ancient home of charmers and magicians, the land of the[Pg 196] Nile, where also the studies of the ancient Magi have been assumed by a succession of learned men, till they were taken up by fanatic Mohammedans, whose creed arranges invisible beings, angels, demons, and others, in regular order, and assigns them a home in distinct parts of the universe. It is not without interest to observe that even Europeans, after a long residence in the Orient, become deeply imbued with such notions, and men like Bayle St. John, in his account of magic performances which he witnessed, do not seem able to remain altogether impartial.

One of the most remarkable phenomena belonging to this branch of magic is the appearance of living or recently deceased persons to friends or supplicants. The peculiarity in this case consists in the constantly changing character of the appearance: the double—as it is called—is the vision of the dying man, which appears to others or to his own senses. The former class of cases was well known in antiquity, for Pythagoras already had, according to popular report, appeared to numerous friends before he died. Herodotus and Maximus Tyrius state both, that Aristæus sent his spirit into different lands to acquire knowledge, and Epimenides and Hernestinus, from Claromenæ, were popularly believed to be able to visit, when in a state of ecstasy, all distant countries, and to return at pleasure. St. Augustine, also, states ("Sermon," 123) that he, himself, had appeared to two persons who had known him only by reputation, and advised them to go to[Pg 197] Hippons in order to obtain their health there by the intercession of St. Stephen. They really went to the place and recovered from their disease. At another time his form appeared to a famous teacher of eloquence in Carthage and explained to him several most difficult passages in Cicero's writings (*De cura pro mortuis,* ch. ii). The saints of the Catholic church having possessed the gift of being in several places at once, apparently so very generally, that the miracle has lost its interest, except where peculiar circumstances seem to suggest the true explanation. Such was, for instance, the last-mentioned case, recited by St. Augustine (*De Civ. Dei.* l. 8. ch. 18). Præstantius requested a philosopher to solve to him some doubts, but received no answer. The following night, however, when Præstantius lay awake, troubled by his difficulties, he suddenly saw his learned friend standing by his bedside and heard from his lips all he desired to know. Upon meeting him next day, he inquired why he had been unwilling to explain the matter in the daytime, and thus caused himself the trouble of coming at midnight to his house. "I never came to your house," was the reply, "but I dreamt that I did." Here was very evidently a case of magic activity on the part of the philosopher, whose mind was, in his sleep, busily engaged in solving the propounded mystery and thus affected not himself only, but his absent friend likewise.

The story of Dr. Donne's vision is well known, and deserves all the more serious attention as his candor[Pg 198] was above suspicion, and his judgment held in the highest esteem. He formed part of an embassy sent to Henry IV. of France, and had been two days in Paris, thinking constantly and anxiously of his wife, whom he had left ill in London. Towards noon he suddenly fell into a kind of trance, and when he recovered his senses related to his friends that he had seen his beloved wife pass him twice, as she walked across the room, her hair dishevelled and her child dead in her arms. When she passed him the second time, she looked sadly into his face and then

disappeared. His fears were aroused to such a degree by this vision that he immediately dispatched a special messenger to England, and twelve days later he received the afflicting news that on that day and at that hour his wife had, after great and protracted suffering, been delivered of a still-born infant (Beaumont, p. 96). In Macnish's excellent work on "Sleep," we find (p. 180) the following account: "A Mr. H. went one day, apparently in the enjoyment of full health, down the street, when he saw a friend of his, Mr. C., who was walking before him. He called his name aloud, but the latter pretended not to hear him, and steadily walked on. H. hastened his steps to overtake him, but his friend also hurried on, and thus remained at the same distance from him; thus the two walked for some time, till suddenly Mr. C. entered a gateway, and when Mr. H. was about to follow, slammed the door violently in his face. Perfectly amazed at such unusual conduct, Mr. H. opened the door and[Pg 199] looked down the long passage, upon which it opened, but saw no one. Determined to solve the mystery, he hurried to his friend's house, and there, to his great astonishment, learnt that Mr. C. had been confined to his bed for some days. It was not until several weeks later that the two friends met at the house of a common acquaintance; Mr. H. told Mr. C. of his adventure, and added laughingly, that having seen his double, he was afraid Mr. C. would not live long. These words were received by all with hearty laughter; but only a few days after this meeting the unfortunate friend was seized with a violent illness, to which he speedily succumbed." What is most remarkable, however, is that Mr. H. also followed him, quite unexpectedly, soon to the grave. Whatever may have been the nature of the event itself, it cannot be doubted that the minds of both friends were far more deeply impressed by its mysteriousness than they would probably have been willing to acknowledge to themselves, and that the nervous excitement thus produced brought out an illness lurking already in their system, and rendered it fatal. A very remarkable case was that of a distinguished diplomat, related by A. Moritz in his "Psychology." He was lying in bed, sleepless, when he noticed his pet dog becoming restless, and apparently disturbed to the utmost by a rustling and whisking about in the room, which he heard but could not explain. Suddenly a kind of white vapor rose by his bed-side, and gradually assumed the outline and even[Pg 200] the features of his mother; he especially noticed a purple ribbon in her cap. He jumped out of bed and endeavored to embrace her, but she fled before him and as suddenly vanished, leaving a bright glare at the place where she had disappeared. It was found, afterwards, that at that hour—10 o'clock A. M.—the old lady had been ill unto death, lying still and almost breathless on her couch; she had felt the anguish of death in her heart, and had thought so anxiously of her son and her sister, that her first question when she recovered was, whether she had not perhaps been visited by the two persons who had thus occupied her whole mind. It was also ascertained that, contrary to a life's habit, she had on that day worn a purple ribbon in her night-cap. A German professor once succeeded in establishing the connection which undoubtedly exists between the will of certain persons and their appearance to others. He had only been married a year in 1823, when he was compelled to leave his wife and to undertake a long and perilous journey. Once, sitting in a peculiarly sad and dejected mood alone in a room of his hotel, he longed so ardently for the society of his wife, that he felt in his heart as if, by a great effort of will, he should be able to see her. He made the effort, and, behold! he saw her sitting at her work-table, busily engaged in sewing, and himself, as was his habit, on a low foot-stool by her side. She tried to conceal her work from his eyes. A few days later a messenger reached him, sent by his wife, who[Pg 201] was in great consternation and anxiety. On that day she also had suddenly seen her husband seated by her side, attentively watching her at work, and continuing there till her father entered the room, upon which the professor had instantly disappeared. When he returned to his house he made

minute inquiries as to the work he had seen in the hands of his wife, and this was of such peculiar character as to exclude all ideas of a mere dream on his part. Here also the supreme will of the professor must have endowed him for the moment with exceptional powers, enabling him to make himself visible to his wife, while the latter, with the ardent love which bound her to her husband, was at the same moment sympathetically excited, and thus enabled to second his will, and to behold him as she was accustomed to see him most frequently.

Owen in his "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World," reports fully a remarkable case here repeated only in outline. Robert Bruce, thirty years old, served as mate on board a merchant vessel on the line between Liverpool and St. John in New Brunswick. When the ship was near the banks he was one day about noon busy calculating the longitude, and thinking that the captain was in his cabin—the next to his own—he called out to him: How have you found it? Looking back over his shoulder, he saw the captain writing busily at his desk, and as he heard no answer, he went in and repeated his question. To his horror the man at the desk raised his head and revealed to him the face[Pg 202] of an entire stranger, who regarded him fixedly. In a state of great excitement he rushed to the upper deck, where he found the captain and told him what had occurred. Thereupon both went down; there was no one in the cabin, but on the captain's slate an unknown hand had written these words: Steer NW.! No effort was spared to solve the mystery; the whole vessel was searched from end to end, but no stranger was discovered; even the handwriting of every member of the crew was examined, but nothing found resembling in the least degree the mysterious warning. After some hesitation the captain decided, as nothing was likely to be lost by so doing, to obey the behest and ordered the helmsman to steer northwest. A few hours later they encountered the wreck of a vessel fastened to an iceberg, with a large crew and a number of passengers, in expectation of certain death. When the unfortunate men were brought back by the ship's boats, Bruce suddenly started in utter amazement, for in one of the saved men he recognized, by dress and features, the person he had seen at the captain's desk in the cabin. The stranger was requested to write down the words: Steer NW.! and when the words were compared with those still standing on the slate, they were identical! Upon inquiry it turned out that the shipwrecked man had at noon fallen into a deep sleep, during which he had seen a ship approaching to their rescue. When he had been waked half an hour later he had confidently assured his fellow-sufferers that they would be rescued, de[Pg 203]scribing even the vessel that was to come to their assistance. Words cannot convey the amazement of the unfortunate men when they saw, a few hours afterwards, a ship bear down upon them, which bore all the marks predicted by their companion, and the latter assured Robert Bruce that everything on board the vessel appeared to him perfectly familiar.

Cases in which men have been seen at the same time at two different places are not less frequent, though here the explanation is much less easy. A French girl, Emilie Sagée, had even to pay a severe penalty for such a peculiarity: she was continually met with at various places at once, and as she could not give a satisfactory excuse for being at one place when her duties required her to be at another, she was suspected of sad misconduct. She lived as governess in a boarding-school in Livonia, and the girls of the institute saw her at the same time sitting among them and walking below in the garden by the side of a friend, and not unfrequently two Miss Sagées would be seen standing before the blackboard, looking exactly alike and performing the same motions, although one of them only wrote with chalk on the board. Once, while she was helping a friend to lace her dress behind, the latter looked into the mirror and to her horror saw two persons

standing there, whereupon she fell down fainting. The poor French girl lost her place not less than nineteen times on account of her double existence (Owen, "Footfalls," etc., p. 348).[Pg 204]

Occasionally this "double" appears to others at the same time that it is seen by the owner himself. Thus the Empress Elizabeth, of Russia, was seen by a Count O. and the Imperial Guards, seated in full regalia on her throne, in the throne-room, while she was lying fast asleep in her bed. The vision was so distinct, and the terror of the beholders so great, that the Empress was actually waked, and informed of what had happened, by her lady-in-waiting, who had herself seen the whole scene. The dauntless Empress did not hesitate for a moment; she dressed hastily and went to the throne-room; when the doors were thrown open, she saw herself, as the others had seen her; but so far from being terrified like her servants, she ordered the guard to fire at the apparition. When the smoke had passed away, the hall was empty—but the brave Empress died a few months latter (*Bl. aus Prevost*, V. p. 92). Jung Stilling mentions another striking illustration. A young lieutenant, full of health and in high spirits, returns home from a merry meeting with old friends. As he approaches the house in which he lives, he sees lights in his room and, to his great terror, himself in the act of being undressed by his servant; as he stands and gazes in speechless wonder, he sees himself walk to his bed and lie down. He remains for some time dumbfounded and standing motionless in the street, till at last a dull, heavy crash arouses him from his revery. He makes an effort, goes to the door and rings the bell; his servant, who opens the door, starts back[Pg 205] frightened, and wonders how he could have dressed so quickly and gone out, as he had but just helped him to undress. When they enter the bedroom, however, they are both still more amazed, for there they find a large part of the ceiling on the bed of the officer, which is broken to pieces by the heavy mortar that had fallen down. The young lieutenant saw in the warning a direct favor of Providence and lived henceforth so as to show his gratitude for this almost miraculous escape ("Jenseits," p. 105).

Not unfrequently the seeing of a "double" is the result of physical or mental disease. Persons suffering of catalepsy are especially prone to see their own forms mixing with strange persons, who people the room in which they are confined. Insanity, also, very often begins with the idea, that the patient's own image is constantly by his side, accompanying him like his shadow wherever he goes, and finally irritating him beyond endurance. In these cases there is, of course, nothing at work but a diseased imagination, and with the return of health the visions also disappear.

Perhaps the most important branch of this subject is the theory, cherished by all nations and in all ages, that the dying possess at the last moment and by a supreme effort, the mysterious power of making themselves perceptible to friends at a distance. We leave out, here also, the numerous instances told of saints, because they are generally claimed by the Catholic Church as miracles. One of the oldest well-authen[Pg 206]ticated cases of the kind, occurred at the court of Cosmo de' Medici, in 1499. In the brilliant circle of eminent men which the great merchant prince had gathered around him, two philosophers, Michael Mercatus, papal prothonotary, and Marsilius Ficinus were prominent by their vast erudition, their common devotion to Platonic philosophy, and the ardent friendship which bound them to each other. They had solemnly agreed that he who should die first, should convey to the other some information about the future state. Ficinus died first, and his friend, writing early in the morning near a window, suddenly heard a horseman dashing up to his house, checking his horse and crying out: "Michael! Michael! nothing is more true than what is said of the life to come!" Mercatus immediately opened the window and saw his bosom friend riding at full speed down the road, on his white horse, until he

was out of sight. He returned, full of thought, to his studies; but wrote at once to inquire about his friend. In due time the answer came, that Ficinus had died in Florence at the very moment in which Mercatus had seen him in Rome. Our authority for this remarkable account is the Cardinal Baronius, who knew Mercatus and heard it from his own lips; but the dates which he mentions do not correspond with the annals of history. He places the event in the year 1491, but Michele de' Mercati was papal prothonotary under Sixtus V. (1585-90) and could, therefore, not have been the friend of Ficinus, the famous physician and theologian,[Pg 207] who was one of Savonarola's most distinguished adherents.

Nor can we attach much weight to the old ballads of Roland, which recite in touching simplicity the anguish of Charlemagne, when he heard from afar the sound of his champion's horn imploring him to come to his assistance, although the two armies were at so great a distance from each other that when the Emperor at last reached the ill-fated valley of Ronceval, his heroic friend had been dead for some days. Calderon depicts in like manner, but with the peculiar coloring of the Spanish devotee, how the dying Eusebio calls his absent friend Alberto to his bedside, to hear his last confession, and how the latter, obeying the mysterious summons, hastens there to fulfil his solemn promise.

A well-known occurrence of this kind is reported by Cotton Mather as having taken place in New England. On May 2d, 1687, at 5 o'clock A. M., a young man, called Beacon, then living in Boston, suddenly saw his brother, whom he had left in London, standing before him in his usual costume, but with a bleeding wound in his forehead. He told him that he had been foully murdered by a reprobate, who would soon reach New England; at the same time he described minutely the appearance of his murderer, and implored his brother to avenge his death, promising him his assistance. Towards the end of June official information reached the colony that the young man had died on May 2d, at 5 o'clock A. M., from the effects of his wounds. But here, also,[Pg 208] several inconsistencies diminish the value of the account. In the first place, the narrator has evidently forgotten the difference in time between London and Boston in America, or he has purposely falsified the report, in order to make it more impressive. Then the murderer never left his country; although he was tried for his crime, escaped the penalty of death by the aid of influential friends. It is, however, possible that he may have had the intention of seeking safety abroad at the time he committed the murder.

The apparition of the great Cardinal of Lorraine at the moment of death, is better authenticated. D'Aubigné tells us (*Hist. Univer.* 1574, p. 719) that the queen Catherine of Medici, was retiring one day, at an earlier hour than usual, in the presence of the King of Navarre, the Archbishop of Lyons, and a number of eminent persons, when she suddenly hid her eyes under her hands and cried piteously for help. She made great efforts to point out to the bystanders the form of the Cardinal, whom she saw standing at the foot of her bed and offering her his hand. She exclaimed repeatedly: "Monsieur le Cardinal, I have nothing to do with you!" and was in a state of most fearful excitement. At last one of the courtiers had the wit to go to the Cardinal's house, and soon returned with the appalling news that the great man had died in that very hour. To this class of cases belongs also the well-known vision of Lord Lyttleton, who had been warned that he would die on a certain day, at midnight, and who did die at the[Pg 209] appointed hour, although his friends had purposely advanced every clock and watch in the house by half an hour, and he himself had gone to bed with his mind relieved of all anxiety. Jarvis, in his "Accreditated Ghost Stories," p. 13, relates the following remarkable case: "When General Stuart was Governor of San Domingo, in the early part of our war of independence, he was one day anxiously awaiting a

certain Major von Blomberg, who had been expected for some time. At last he determined to dictate to his secretary a dispatch to the Home Government on this subject, when steps were heard outside, and the major himself entered, desiring to confer with the Governor in private. He said: 'When you return to England, pray go into Dorsetshire to such and such a farm, where you will find my son, the fruit of a secret union with Lady Laing. Take care of the poor orphan. The woman who has reared him has the papers that establish his legitimacy; they are in a red morocco pocket-book. Open it and make the best use you can of the papers you will find. You will never see me again.' Thereupon the major walked away, but nobody else had seen him come or go, and nobody had opened the house for him. A few days later, news reached the island that the vessel on which Blomberg had taken passage, had foundered, and all hands had perished, at the very hour when the former had appeared to his friend the Governor. It became also known that the two friends had pledged each other, not only that the survivor should take care of the children[Pg 210] of him who died first, but also that he should make an effort to appear to him if permitted to do so. The Governor found everything as it had been told him; he took charge of his friend's son, who became a *protégé* of Queen Charlotte, when she heard the remarkable story, and was educated as a companion of the future George IV."

Lord Byron tells the following story of Captain Kidd. He was lying one night in his cabin asleep, when he suddenly felt oppressed by a heavy weight apparently resting on him; he opened his eyes, and by the feeble light of a small lamp he fancied he saw his brother, dressed in full uniform, and leaning across the bed. Under the impression that the whole is a mere idle delusion of his senses, he turns over and falls asleep once more. But the sense of oppression returns, and upon opening his eyes he sees the same image as before. Now he tries to seize it, and to his amazement touches something wet. This terrifies him, and he calls a brother officer, but when the latter enters, nothing is to be seen. After the lapse of several months Captain Kidd received information that in that same night his brother had been drowned in the Indian Sea. He himself told the story to Lord Byron, and the latter endorsed its accuracy (*Monthly Rev.*, 1830, p. 229).

One of the most remarkable interviews of this kind, which continued for some time, and led to a prolonged and interesting conversation during which the three[Pg 211] senses of sight, hearing, and touch, were alike engaged, is that which a Mrs. Bargrave had on the 8th of September, 1805. According to an account given by Jarvis ("Accred. Ghost Stories," Lond., 1823), she was sitting in her house in Canterbury, in a state of great despondency, when a friend of hers, Miss Veal, who lived at Dover, and whom she had not seen for two years and a half, entered the room. The two ladies had formerly been very intimate, and found equal comfort, during a period of great sorrow, in reading together works treating of future life and similar subjects. Her friend wore a traveling suit, and the clocks were striking noon as she entered; Mrs. Bargrave wished to embrace her, but Miss Veal held a hand before her eyes, stating that she was unwell and drew back. She then added that she was on the point of making a long journey, and feeling an irresistible desire to see her friend once more, she had come to Canterbury. She sat down in an armchair and began a lengthened conversation, during which she begged her friend's pardon for having so long neglected her, and gradually turned to the subject which had been uppermost in Mrs. Bargrave's mind, the views entertained by various authors of the life after death. She attempted to console the latter, assuring her that "a moment of future bliss was ample compensation for all earthly sufferings," and that "if the eyes of our mind were as open as those of the body, we should see a number of higher beings ready for our protection." She declined,[Pg 212] however, reading certain verses aloud at her friend's request, "because holding her head low

gave her the headache." She frequently passed her hand over her face, but at last begged Mrs. Bargrave to write a letter to her brother, which surprised her friend very much, for in the letter she wished her brother to distribute certain rings and sums of money belonging to her among friends and kinsmen. At this time she appeared to be growing ill again, and Mrs. Bargrave moved close up to her in order to support her, in doing so she touched her dress and praised the materials, whereupon Miss Veal told her that it was recently made, but of a silk which had been cleaned. Then she inquired after Mrs. Bargrave's daughter, and the latter went to a neighboring house to fetch her; on her way back she saw Miss Veal at a distance in the street, which was full of people, as it happened to be market-day, but before she could overtake her, her friend had turned round a corner and disappeared.

Upon inquiry it appeared that Miss Veal, whom she had thus seen, whose dress she had touched, and with whom she had conversed for nearly two hours, had died the day before! When the question was discussed with the relatives of the deceased, it was found that she had communicated several secrets to her Canterbury friend. The fact that her dress was made of an old silk-stuff was known to but one person, who had done the cleaning and made the dress, which she recognized instantly from the description. She had also acknowledged to[Pg 213] Mrs. Bargrave her indebtedness to a Mr. Breton for an annual pension of ten pounds, a fact which had been utterly unknown during her lifetime.

In Germany a number of such cases are reported, and often by men whose names alone would give authority to their statements. Thus the philosopher Schopenhauer (*Parerga*, etc., I. p. 277) mentions a sick servant girl in Frankfort on the Main, who died one night at the Jewish hospital of the former Free City. Early the next morning her sister and her niece, who lived several miles from town, appeared at the gate of the institution to make inquiries about their kinswoman. Both, though living far apart, had seen her distinctly during the preceding night, and hence their anxiety. The famous writer E. M. Arndt, also, quotes a number of striking revelations which were in this manner made to a lady of his acquaintance. Thus he was once, in 1811, visiting the Island of Rügen, in the Baltic, and having been actively engaged all day, was sitting in an easy-chair, quietly nodding. Suddenly he sees his dear old aunt Sophie standing before him; on her face her well-known sweet smile, and in her arms her two little boys, whom he loved like his own. She was holding them out to him as if she wished to say by this gesture: "Take care of the little ones!" The next day his brother joined him and brought him the news that their aunt had died on the preceding evening at the hour when she had appeared to Arndt. Wieland, even, by no means given to credit easily accounts of[Pg 214] supernatural occurrences, mentions in his "Euthanasia" a Protestant lady of his acquaintance, whose mind was frequently filled with extraordinary visions. She was a somnambulist, and subject to cataleptic attacks. A Benedictine monk, an old friend of the family, had been ordered to Bellinzona, in Switzerland, but his correspondence with his friends had never been interrupted for years. Years after his removal the above-mentioned lady was taken ill, and at once predicted the day and hour of her death. On the appointed day she was cheerful and perfectly composed; at a certain hour, however, she raised herself slightly on her couch, and said with a sweet smile, "Now it is time for me to go and say good-bye to Father C." She immediately fell asleep, then awoke again, spoke a few words, and died. At the same hour the monk was sitting in Bellinzona at his writing-table, a so-called pandora, a musical instrument, by his side. Suddenly he hears a noise like an explosion, and looking up startled, sees a white figure, in whom he at once recognizes his distant friend by her sweet smile. When he examined his instrument he found the sounding-board cracked, which, no

doubt, had given rise to his hearing what he considered a "warning voice." The Rev. Mr. Oberlin, well-known and much revered in Germany, and by no means forgotten in our own country, where a prosperous college still bears his name, declares in his memoirs that he had for nine years constant intercourse with his deceased wife. He saw her for the first time after her death in broad[Pg 215] daylight and when he was wide awake; afterwards the conversations were carried on partly in the day and partly at night. Other people in the village in which he lived saw her as well as himself. Nor was it by the eye only that the pious, excellent man judged of her presence; frequently, when he extended his hand, he would feel his fingers gently pressed, as his wife had been in the habit of doing when she passed by him and would not stop. But there was much bitterness and sorrow also mixed up with the sweetness of these mysterious relations. The passionate attachment of husband and wife could ill brook the terrible barrier that separated them from each other, and often the latter would look so wretched and express her grief in such heartrending words that the poor minister was deeply afflicted. The impression produced on his mind was that her soul, forced for unknown reasons to remain for some time in an intermediate state, remained warmly attached to earthly friends and lamented the inability to confer with them after the manner of men. After nine years the husband's visions suddenly ended and he was informed in a dream that his wife had been admitted into a higher heaven, where she enjoyed the promised peace with her Saviour, but could no longer commune with mortal beings.

It is well known that even the great reformer, Martin Luther, knew of several similar cases, and in his "Table Talk" mentions more than one remarkable instance.[Pg 216]

Another well-known and much discussed occurrence of this kind happened in the days of Mazarin, and created a great sensation in the highest circles at Paris. A marquis of Rambouillet and a marquis of Preci, intimate friends, had agreed to inform each other of their fate after death. The former was ordered to the army in Flanders, while the other remained in the capital. Here he was taken ill with a fever, several weeks after parting with his friend, and as he was one morning towards 6 o'clock lying in bed awake, the curtains were suddenly drawn aside, and his friend dressed as usual, booted and spurred, was standing before him. Overjoyed, he was about to embrace him, but his friend drew back and said that he had come only to keep his promise after having been killed in a skirmish the day before, and that Preci also would share his fate in the first combat in which he should be engaged. The latter thinks his friend is joking, jumps up and tries to seize him—but he feels nothing. The vision, however, is still there; Rambouillet even shows him the fatal wound in his thigh from which the blood seems still to be flowing. Then only he disappears and Preci remains utterly overcome; at last he summons his valet, rouses the whole house, and causes every room and every passage to be searched. No trace, however, is found, and the whole vision is attributed to his fever. But a few days later the mail arrives from Flanders, bringing the news that Rambouillet had really fallen in such a skirmish and died from a wound in the thigh;[Pg 217] the prediction also was fulfilled, for Preci fell afterwards in his first fight near St. Antoine (Petaval, *Causes Célèbres*, xii. 269).

The parents of the well-known writer Schubert were exceptionally endowed with magic powers of this kind. The father once heard, as he thought in a dream, the voice of his aged mother, who called upon him to come and visit her in the distant town in which she lived, if he desired to see her once more before she died. He rejected the idea that this was more than a common dream; but soon he heard the voice repeating the warning. Now he jumped up and saw his mother standing before him, extending her hand and saying: "Christian Gottlob, farewell, and may God bless you; you will not see me again upon earth," and with these words she disappeared.

Although no one had apprehended such a calamity, she had actually died at that hour, after expressing in her last moments a most anxious desire to see her son once more.

Tangible perceptions of persons dying at a distance are, of course, very rare. Still, more than one such case is authoritatively stated; among these, the following: A lawyer in Paris had returned home and walked, in order to reach his own bedroom, through that of his brother. To his great astonishment he saw the latter lying in his bed; received, however, no answer to his questions. Thereupon he walked up to the bed, touched his brother and found the body icy cold. Of a sudden the form vanished and the bed was empty. At[Pg 218] that instant it flashed through his mind that he and his brother had promised each other that the one dying first should, if possible, give a sign to the survivor. When he recovered from the deep emotion caused by these thoughts, he left the room and as he opened the door he came across a number of men who bore the body of his brother, who had been killed by a fall from his horse (*La Patrie*, Sept. 22, 1857). The Count of Neuilly, also, was warned in a somewhat similar manner. He was at college and on the point of paying a visit to his paternal home, when a letter came telling him that his father was not quite well and that he had better postpone his visit a few days. Later letters from his mother mentioned nothing to cause him any uneasiness. But several days afterward, at one o'clock in the morning, he thought, apparently in a dream, that he saw a pale ghastly figure rise slowly at the lower end of his bed, extend both arms, embrace him and then sink slowly down again out of sight. He uttered heart-rending cries, and fell out of his bed, upsetting a chair and a table. When his tutor and a man-servant rushed into the room, they found him lying unconscious on the floor, covered with cold, clammy perspiration and strangely disfigured. As soon as he was restored to consciousness, he burst out into tears and assured them that his father had died and come to take leave of him. In vain did his friends try to calm his mind, he remained in a state of utter dejection. Three days later a letter came from his mother, bringing him the sad[Pg 219] news, that his father had died on that night and at the hour in which he had appeared by his bedside. The unfortunate Count could never entirely get rid of the overwhelming impression which this occurrence had made on his mind, and was, to the day of his death, firmly convinced of the reality of this meeting (*Dix Années d' émigration.* Paris, 1865).

We learn from such accounts that there prevails among all men, at all ages, a carefully repressed, but almost irresistible belief in supernatural occurrences, and in the close proximity of the spirit world. This belief is neither to be treated with ridicule nor to be objected to as unchristian, since it is an abiding witness that men entertain an ineradicable conviction of the immortality of the soul. No arguments can ever destroy in the minds of the vast majority of men this innate and intuitive faith. We may decline to believe with them the existence of supernatural agencies, as long as no experimental basis is offered; but we ought, at the same time, to be willing to modify our incredulity as soon as an accumulation of facts appear to justify us in so doing. Our age is so completely given up to materialism with its ceaseless hurry and worry, that we ought to hail with a sense of relief new powers which require examination, and which offer to our intellectual faculties an untrodden field of investigation, full of incidents refreshing to our weary mind, and promising rich additions to our store of knowledge.

It can hardly be denied that there is at least a pos[Pg 220]sibility of the existence of a higher spiritual power within us, which, often slumbering and altogether unknown, or certainly unobserved during life, becomes suddenly free to act in the hour of death. This may be brought about by the fact that at that time the strength of the body is exhausted, and earthly wants no longer press upon us, while the spiritual part of our being, largely relieved of its bondage,

becomes active in its own peculiar way, and thus acquires a power which we are disposed to call a magic power. This power is, of course, not used consciously, for consciousness presupposes the control over our senses, but it acts by intuitive impulse. Hence the wide difference existing between the so-called magic of charmers, enchanters, and conjurors, justly abhorred and strictly prohibited by divine laws, and the effects of such supreme efforts made by the soul, which depend upon involuntary action, and are never made subservient to wicked purposes.

The results of such exertions are generally impressions made apparently upon the eye or the ear; but it need not be said that what is seen or heard in such cases, is merely the effect of a deeply felt sensation in our soul which seeks an outward expression. If our innermost being is thus suddenly appealed to, as it were, by the spirit of a dying friend or companion, his image arises instantaneously before our mind's eye, and we fancy we see him in bodily form, or our memory recalls the familiar sounds by which his appearance[Pg 221] was wont to be accompanied. Dying musicians remind distant friends of their former relations by sweet sounds, and a sailor, wounded to death, appears in his uniform to relatives at home. The series of sights and sounds by which such intercourse is established, varies from the simplest and faintest vision to an apparently clear and distinct perception of well-known forms, and constitute feeble, hardly perceptible, sighs or sobs to words uttered aloud, or whole melodies clearly recited. If a living person, by such an unconscious but all-powerful effort of will, makes himself seen by others, we call the vision a "double," in German, a "Doppelgänger;" if he produces a state of dualism, such as has been mentioned before, and sees his own self in space before him, we speak of second sight.

Such efforts are, however, by no means strictly limited to the moment of dissolution, when soul and body are already in the act of parting. They occur also in living persons, but almost invariably only in diseased persons. The exceptions belong to the small number of men in whom great excitement from without, or a mysterious power of will, cause a state of ecstasy; they are, in common parlance, "beside themselves." In this condition, their soul is for the moment freed from the bondage in which it is held by its earthy companion, and such men become clairvoyants and prophets, or they are enabled actually to affect other men at a distance, in various ways. Thus it may very well be, that strange visions, the hearing of mysterious voices, and especially the[Pg 222] most familiar phenomenon, second sight, are in reality nothing more than symptoms of a thoroughly diseased system, and this explains very simply the frequency with which death follows such mysterious occurrences.

Men have claimed—and proved to the satisfaction of more or less considerable numbers of friends—that they could at will cause a partial and momentary parting between their souls and their bodies. Here also antiquity is our first teacher, if we believe Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* vii. c. 52), Hermotimus could at his pleasure fall into a trance and then let his soul proceed from his body to distant places. Upon being aroused, he reported what he had seen and heard abroad, and his statements were, in every case, fully confirmed. Cardanus, also, could voluntarily throw himself into a state of apparent syncope, as he tells us in most graphic words (*De Res. Var.* v. iii. l. viii. c. 43). The first sensation of which he was always fully conscious, was a peculiar pain in the head, which gradually extended downward along the spine, and at last spread over the extremities—evidently a purely nervous process. Then he felt as if a "door was opened, and he himself was leaving his body," whereupon he not only saw persons at a distance, but noticed all that befell them, and recalled it after he had recovered from the trance. An old German Abbé Freitheim, of whose remarkable work on *Steganographie* (1621), unfortunately only a few

sheets have been preserved, claims the power to commune with absent friends by the mere energy of his will. "I can," says he, "make known my[Pg 223] thoughts to the initiated, at a distance of many hundred miles, without word, writing or cypher, by any messenger. The latter cannot betray me, for he knows nothing. If needs be, I can even dispense with the messenger. If my correspondent should be buried in the deepest dungeon I could still convey to him my thoughts as clearly, as fully, and as frequently as might be desirable, and all this, quite simply, without superstition, without the aid of spirits."

The famous Agrippa (*De occulta philos., Lugduni*, III. p. 13) quotes the former writer, and asserts that he also could, by mere effort of will, in a perfectly simple and natural manner convey his thoughts not to the initiated only, but to any one, even when his correspondent's present place of residence should be unknown. The most remarkable, and, at the same time, the best authenticated case of this kind, is that of a high German official mentioned in a scientific paper (*Nasse. Zeitschrift für psychische Aerzte*, 1820), and frequently copied into others. A Counsellor Wesermann claimed to be able to cause distant friends to dream of any subject he might choose. Whenever he awoke at night and made a determined effort to produce such an effect, he never failed, provided the nature of the desired dream was calculated to startle or deeply excite his friends. His power was tested in this manner. He engaged to cause a young officer, who was stationed at Aix-la-Chapelle, nearly fifty miles from his own home, to dream of a[Pg 224] young lady who had died not long ago. It was eleven o'clock at night, but by some accident the lieutenant was not at home in bed, but at a friend's country-seat, discussing the French campaign. Suddenly the colonel, his host, and he himself see at the same time the door open, a lady enter, salute them sadly, and beckon them to follow her. The two officers rise and leave the room after her, but once out of doors, the figure disappears, and when they inquire of the sentinels standing guard outside, they are told that no one has entered. What made the matter more striking yet, was the fact that although both men had seen the door open, this could not really have been so, for the wood had sprung and the door creaked badly whenever it was opened. The same Wesermann could, in like manner, cause his friends to see his own person and to hear secrets which he seemed to whisper into their ears whenever he chose; but he admitted upon it that his will was not at all times equally strong, and that, hence, his efforts were not always equally successful. Cases of similar powers are very numerous. A very curious example was published in 1852, in a work on "Psychologic Studies" (Schlemmer, p. 59). The author, who was a police agent in the Prussian service, asserted that persons who apprehended being conducted to gaol with special anxiety, often made themselves known there in advance, announcing their arrival by knocks at the gates, opening of doors, or footsteps heard in the room set aside for examining new comers. One day, not the[Pg 225] writer only, but all the prisoners in the same building, and even the sentinel at the gate heard distinctly a great disturbance and the rattling of chains in a cell exclusively appropriated to murderers. The next day a criminal was brought who had expressed such horror of this gaol, and made such resistance to the officials who were to carry him there, that it had become necessary, after a great uproar, to chain him hands and feet. It is well known that the mother of the great statesman Canning at one time of her life suffered under most mysterious though harmless nightly visitations. Her circumstances were such that she readily accepted the offer of a dwelling which stood unoccupied, with the exception of the basement, in which a carpenter had his workshop. At nightfall he and his workmen left the house, carefully locking the door, but night after night, at twelve o'clock precisely, work began once more in the abandoned part of the house, as far as the ear could judge, and the noise made by planing and sawing, cutting and carving increased, till the fearless old lady slipt down in her stocking feet

and opened the door. Instantly the noise was hushed, and she looked into the dark deserted room. But as soon as she returned to her chamber the work began anew, and continued for some time; nor was she the only one who heard it, but others, the owner of the house included, heard everything distinctly.

The following well-authenticated account of a posthumous appearance, is not without its ludicrous ele[Pg 226]ment. A court-preacher in one of the little Saxon Duchies, appeared once in bands and gowns before his sovereign, bowing most humbly and reverently. The duke asked what he desired, but received no answer except another deep reverence. A second question meets with the same reply, whereupon the divine leaves the room, descends the stairs and crosses the court-yard, while the prince, much surprised at his strange conduct, stands at a window and watches him till he reaches the gates. Then he sends a page after him to try and ascertain what was the matter with the old gentleman, but the page comes running back almost beside himself, and reports that the minister had died a short while before. The prince refuses to believe his report, and sends a high official, but the latter returns with the same report and this additional information: The dying man had asked for writing materials, in order to recommend his widow to his sovereign, but had hardly commenced writing the letter when death surprised him. The fragment was brought to the duke and convinced him that his faithful servant, unable to reach him by letter, and yet nervously anxious to approach him, had spiritually appeared to him in his most familiar costume (Daumer, *Mystagog.* I. p. 224).

Before we regret such statements or treat them with ridicule, it will be well to remember, that men endowed with an extraordinary power of controlling certain faculties of body and soul, are by no means rare, and that the difference between them and those last mentioned,[Pg 227] consists only in the degree. We speak of the power of sight and limit it ordinarily to a certain distance—and yet a Hottentot, we are told, can perceive the head of a gazelle in the dry, uniform grass of an African plain, at the distance of a thousand yards! Many men cannot hear sounds in nature which are perfectly audible to others, while some persons hear even certain notes uttered by tiny insects, which escape altogether the average hearing of man. Patients under treatment by Baron Reichenbach, saw luminous objects and the appearance of lights hovering above ground, where neither he nor any of his friends could perceive anything but utter darkness, and the special gift with which some persons are endowed to feel, as it were, the presence of water and of metals below the surface, is well authenticated. Poor Caspar Hauser, bred in darkness and solitude, felt various and deep impressions upon his whole being during the first months of his free life, whenever he came in contact with plants, stones or metals. The latter sent a current through all his limbs; tobacco fields made him deadly sick, and the vicinity of a graveyard gave him violent pains in his chest. Persons who were introduced to him for the first time, sent a cold current through him; and when they possessed a specially powerful physique, they caused him abundant perspiration, and often even convulsions. The waves of sound he felt so much more acutely than others, that he always continued to hear them with delight, long after the last sound had passed away from the ears of others. It may be fairly[Pg 228] presumed that this extreme sensitiveness to outward impressions is originally possessed by all men, but becomes gradually dulled and dimmed by constant repetition; at the same time it may certainly be preserved in rare privileged cases, or it may come back again to the body in a diseased or disordered condition, and at the moment of dissolution.

Nor is the power occasionally granted to men to control their senses limited to these; even the spontaneous functions of the body are at times subject to the will of man. An Englishman, for

instance, could at will modify the beating of his heart (Cheyne, "New Dis.," p. 307), and a German produced, like a veritable ruminant, the antiperistaltic motions of the stomach, whenever he chose (Blumenbach, *Phys.* § 294). Other men have been known who could at any moment cause the familiar "goose-skin," or perspiration, to appear in any part of the body, and many persons can move not only the ears—a lost faculty according to Darwin—but even enlarge or contract the pupil of the eye, after the manner of cats and parrots. Even the circulation of the blood has been known, in a few rare cases, to have been subject to the will of men, and the great philosopher Kant did not hesitate to affirm, supported as he was by his own experience, that men could, if they were but resolute enough, master, by a mere effort of the will, not a few of their diseases.

A striking evidence of the comparative facility with which men thus exceptionally gifted, may be able to[Pg 229] imitate certain magic phenomena, was once given by an excellent mimic, whom *Richard* describes in his *Théorie des Songes*. He could change his features so completely that they assumed a deathlike appearance; his senses lost gradually their power of perception, and the vital spirit was seen to withdraw from the outer world. A slow, quivering motion passed through his whole system from the feet upward, as if he wished to rise from the ground. After a while all efforts of the body to remain upright proved fruitless; it looked as if life had actually begun to leave it already. At this moment he abandoned his deception and was so utterly exhausted that he heard and saw but with extreme difficulty.

In the face of these facts the possibility at least cannot be denied that certain specially endowed individuals may possess, in health or in disease, the power to perceive phenomena which appear all the more marvelous because they are beyond the reach of ordinary powers of perception.

In our own day superstition and wanton, or cunningly devised, imposture have been so largely mixed up with the subject, that a strong and very natural prejudice has gradually grown up against the belief in ghosts. Every strange appearance, every mysterious coincidence, that escaped the most superficial investigation, was forthwith called a ghost. History records, besides, numerous cases in which the credulity of great men has been played upon for purposes of policy and statecraft. When the German Emperor Joseph showed his[Pg 230] great fondness of Augustus of Saxony—afterwards king of Poland—his Austrian counsellors became alarmed at the possible influence of such intimacy of their sovereign with a Protestant prince, and determined to break it off. Night after night, therefore, a fearful vision arose before the German emperor, rattling its chains and accusing the young prince of grievous heresy. Augustus, however, known already at that time for his gigantic strength, asked Joseph's permission to sleep in his room; when the ghost appeared as usual, the young prince sprang upon him, and feeling his flesh and blood, threw him bodily out of a window of the second story into a deep fosse. The unfortunate king of Prussia, Frederick William II., fell soon after his ascension of the throne into the hands of designing men, who determined to profit by his great kindness of heart and his tendency to mysticism, and began to work upon him by supernatural apparitions. One of the most cunningly devised impostures of the kind was practised upon King Gustavus III. of Sweden by ambitious noblemen of his court.

The scene was the ancient Lofoe church in Drotingholm, a favorite residence of former Swedish monarchs. The king's physician, Iven Hedin, learnt accidentally from the sexton that his master had been spending several nights in the building, in company with a few of his courtiers. Alarmed by this information he persuaded the sexton to let him watch the proceedings from a

secret place in the old steeple of the[Pg 231] church. An opportunity came in the month of August, 1782, and he had scarcely taken possession of his post when two of the royal secretaries came in, closed the door, and arranged a curious contrivance in the body of the building. To his great surprise and amusement the doctor saw them fasten some horse-hairs to the heavy chandeliers suspended from the lofty ceiling, and then pin to them masks sewed on to white floating garments. Finally large quantities of incense were scattered on the floor and set on fire, while all lights, save a few thin candles, were extinguished. Then the king was ushered in with five of his courtiers, made to assume a peculiar, very irksome position, and all were asked to hold naked swords upon each other's breasts. Thereupon the first comer murmured certain formulas of conjuration, and performed some ceremonies, when his companion slowly drew up one of the masks. It was fashioned to resemble the great Gustavus Adolphus, and in the dimly-lighted church, filled with dense smoke, it looked to all intents and purposes like a ghost arising from the vaults underneath. It disappeared as slowly into the darkness above, and was immediately followed by another mask representing Adolphus Frederick, and even the physician, who knew the secret, could not repress a shudder, so admirably was the whole contrived. Then followed a few flashes of lightning, during which the horse-hairs were removed, lights were brought in, and the king, deeply moved and shedding silent tears, escorted from the[Pg 232] building. The faithful physician watched his opportunity, and when a favorable hour appeared, revealed the secret to his master, and thus, fortunately for Sweden, defeated a very dangerous and most skillfully-conducted conspiracy.

Even ventriloquism has lent its aid to many an historical imposture, as in the case of Francis I. of France, whose valet, Louis of Brabant, possessed great skill in that art, and used it unsparingly for his own benefit and to the advantage of courtiers who employed him for political purposes. He even persuaded the mother of a beautiful and wealthy young lady to give him her daughter's hand by imitating the voice of her former husband, and commanding her to do so in order to release him from purgatory!

We fear that to this class of ghostly appearances must also be counted the almost historical White Lady of the Margraves of Brandenburg.

Report says that she represents a Countess Kunigunde of Orlamünde, who lived in the fourteenth century and killed her two children, for which crime she was executed by order of a Burggrave of Nuremberg. History, however, knows nothing of such an event, and the White Lady does not appear till 1486, when she is first seen in the old palace at Baireuth. This was nothing but a trick of the courtiers; whenever they desired to leave the dismal town and the uncomfortable building, one of the court ladies personated the ghost, and occasionally, even two white ladies were seen at the[Pg 233] same time. In 1540 the ghost met with a tragic fate; it had appeared several times in the castle of Margrave Albert the warrior, and irritated the prince to such a degree that he at last seized it one night and hurled it headlong down the long staircase. The morning dawn revealed his chancellor, Christopher Strass, who had betrayed his master and now paid with a broken neck for his bold imposture. After this catastrophe the White Lady was not seen for nearly a hundred years, when she suddenly reappeared in Baireuth. In the year 1677 the then reigning Margrave of Brandenburg found her one day sitting in his own chair and was terrified; the next day he rode out, fell from his horse, and was instantly killed. From this time the White Lady became a part of the history of the house of Brandenburg, accompanying the princes to Berlin and making it her duty to forewarn the illustrious family of any impending calamity. King Frederick I. saw her distinctly, but other sovereigns discerned only a vague outline and now and

then the nose and eyes, while all the rest was closely veiled. In the old palace at Baireuth there exist to this day two portraits of the White Lady, one in white, as she appeared of old, and very beautiful, the other in black satin, with her hair powdered and dressed after more modern fashion—there is no likeness between the two faces. The ghost was evidently a good patriot, for she disturbed French officers who were quartered there, in the new palace as well as in the old, and as late as 1806 thoroughly frightened a number of generals who[Pg 234] had laughed at the credulity of the Germans. In 1809 General d'Espagne roused his aides in the depth of night by fearful cries, and when they rushed in he was found lying in the centre of the room, under the bedstead. He told them that the White Lady, in a costume of black and white, resembling one of the portraits, had appeared and threatened to strangle him; in the struggle she had dragged the bedstead to the middle of the room and there upset it. The room was thoroughly searched at his command, the hangings removed from the walls, and the whole floor taken up, but no trace was found of any opening through which a person might have entered; the doors had been guarded by sentinels. The general left the place immediately, looking upon the vision as a warning of impending evil, and, sure enough, a few days later he found his death upon the battle-field of Aspern. Even the great Napoleon, whose superstition was generally thought to be confined to his faith in his "star," would not lodge in the rooms haunted by the White Lady, and when he reached Baireuth in 1812, a suite of rooms was prepared for him in another wing of the palace. It was, however, noticed that even there his night's rest must have been interrupted, for on the next morning he was remarkably nervous and out of humor, murmuring repeatedly "*Ce maudit château*," and declaring that he would never again stay at the place. When he returned to that neighborhood in 1813, he refused to occupy the rooms that had been prepared for him, and continued[Pg 235] his journey far into the night, rather than remain at Baireuth. The town was, however, forever relieved of its ill-fame after 1822. It is not without interest that in the same year the steward of the royal palace died, and report says in his rooms were found a number of curiosities apparently connected with the White Lady's costume; if this be so, his ardent patriotism and fierce hatred of the French might well furnish a cue to some of the more recent apparitions. The White Lady continued to appear in Berlin, and the terror she created was not even allayed by repeated discoveries of most absurd efforts at imposture. Once she turned out to be a white towel agitated by a strong draught between two windows; at another time it was a kitchen-maid on an errand of love, and a third time an old cook taking an airing in the deserted rooms. She appeared once more in the month of February, 1820, announcing, as many believed, the death of the reigning monarch, which took place in June; and quite recently (1872) similar warning was given shortly before the emperor's brother, Prince Albrecht, died in his palace.

White ladies are, however, by no means an exclusive privilege of the house of Brandenburg; Scotland has its ancient legends, skillfully used in novel, poem and opera, and Italy boasts of a Donna Bianca, at Colalta, in the Marca Trivigiana, of whom Byron spoke as if he had never doubted her existence. Ireland has in like manner the Banshee, who warns with her plaintive voice the descendants of certain old families, whenever[Pg 236] a great calamity threatens one of the members. Curiously enough she clings to these once powerful but now often wretchedly poor families, as if pride of descent and attachment to old splendor prevailed even in the realms of magic.

Historical ghosts play, nevertheless, a prominent part in all countries. Lilly, Baxter and Clarendon, all relate the remarkable warnings which preceded the murder of Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. In this case the warning was given not to the threatened man, but to an old and

faithful friend, who had already been intimate with the duke's father. He saw the latter appear to him several nights in succession, urging him to go to the duke, and after revealing to him certain peculiar circumstances, to warn him against the plots of his enemies, who threatened his life. Parker was afraid to appear ridiculous and delayed giving the warning. But the ghost left him no peace, and at last, in order to decide him, revealed to him a secret only known to himself and his ill-fated son. The latter, when his old friend at last summoned courage to deliver the mysterious message, was at first inclined to laugh at the warning; but when Parker mentioned the father's secret, he turned pale and declared only the Evil One could have entrusted it to mortal man. Nevertheless, he took no steps to rid himself of his traitorous friend and continued his sad life as before. The father's ghost thereupon appeared once more to Parker, with deep sadness in his features and hold[Pg 237]ing a knife in his hand, with which, he said, his unfortunate son would be murdered. Parker, whose own impending death had been predicted at the same time, once more waited upon the great duke, but again in vain; he was rudely sent back and requested not to trouble the favorite's peace any more by his foolish dreams. A few days afterwards Lieutenant Felton assassinated the duke with precisely such a knife as Parker had seen in his visions.

A similar occurrence is related of the famous Duchess of Mazarin, the favorite of Charles II., and Madame de Beauclair, who stood in the same relation to James II. The two ladies, who were bosom friends, had pledged their word to each other, that she who died first should appear to the survivor and inform her of the nature of the future state. The duchess died; but as no message came from her, her friend denied stoutly and persistently the immortality of the soul. But many years later, when the promise was long forgotten, the duchess suddenly was seen one night, gliding softly through the room and looking sweetly at her friend, whispering to her: "Beauclair, between twelve and one o'clock to-night you will be near me." The poor lady died at the appointed hour (Nork. "Existence of Spirits," p. 260). Less well-authenticated is the account of a warning given to King George I. shortly before his death, although it was generally believed throughout England at the time it occurred. The report was that the Queen, Sophia, repeatedly showed herself to her[Pg 238] husband, beseeching him to break off his intercourse with his beautiful friend, Lady Horatia. As these requests availed nothing, and the monarch refused even to believe in the reality of her appearance, she at last tied a knot in a lace collar, declaring that "if mortal fingers could untie the knot, the king and Lady Horatia might laugh at her words." The fair lady tried her best to undo it, but giving it up in despair, she threw the collar into the fire; the king, highly excited, snatched the lace from the burning coals, but in so doing, touched with it the light gauze dress of his companion. In her terror she ran with great swiftness through room after room, thus fanning the flames into a blaze, and perished amid excruciating pains. The king, it is well known, died only two months later.

A case which created a very great sensation at the time when it happened, and became generally known through the admirable manner in which it was narrated by the eloquent Bernardin de St. Pierre (*Journal de Trévoux*, vol. viii.), was that of the priest Bezuel. When a young man of 15, and at college, he contracted an intimate friendship with the son of a royal official, called Desfontaines. The two friends often spoke of future life, and when parted in 1696, they signed with their blood a solemn compact, in which they agreed that the first who died should appear after death to the survivor. They wrote to each other constantly, and frequently alluded in their letters to the agreement. A year after[Pg 239] their parting, Bezuel happened to be, one day, in the fields, delivering a message to some workmen, when he suddenly fell down fainting. As he was in perfect health, he knew not what to think of this accident, but when it occurred a second and a

third time, at the same hour, on the two following days, he became seriously uneasy. On the last occasion, however, he fell into a trance, in which he saw nothing around him, but beheld his friend Desfontaines, who seized him by the arm and led him some thirty yards aside. The workmen saw him go there, as if obeying a guardian hand, and converse with an unseen person for three quarters of an hour. The young man heard here from his friend's lips, that he had been drowned while bathing in the river Orne on the day and at the hour when Bezuel had had his first fainting fit, that a companion had endeavored to save him, but when seized by the foot by the drowning man, had kicked him on the chest, and thus caused him to sink to the bottom. Bezuel inquired after all the details and received full answers, but none to questions about the future life; nevertheless, the apparition continued to speak fluently but calmly, and requested Bezuel to make certain communications to his kinsmen, and to repeat the "seven penitential psalms," which he ought to have said himself as a penance. It also mentioned the work in which Desfontaines had been engaged up to the day of his death, and some names which he had cut in the bark of a tree near the town in which he lived. Then it disappeared. Bezuel was not able to[Pg 240] carry out his friend's wishes, although the arm by which he had been seized, reminded him daily of his duty by a severe pain; after a month, the drowned man appeared twice more, urging his requests, and saying each time at the end of the interview, "*bis, bis*," just as he had been accustomed to do when in life. At last the young priest found the means to do his friend's bidding; the pain in the arm ceased instantly and his health remained perfect to the end of his life. When he reached Caen where Desfontaines had perished, he found everything precisely as he had been told in his visions, and two years afterwards he discovered by chance even the tree with the names cut in the bark. The amiable Abbé de St. Pierre does his best to explain the whole occurrence as a natural series of very simple accidents; there can be, however, no doubt of the exceptionable character of the leading features of the event, and the priest, from whose own account the facts are derived, must evidently in his trance have been endowed with powers of clairvoyance.

In the first part of this century a book appeared in Germany which led to a very general and rather violent discussion of the whole subject. It was written by a Dr. Woetzel, whose mind had, no doubt, been long engaged in trying to solve mysteries like that of the future life, since he had early come in contact with strange phenomena. The father of a dear friend of his having fainted in consequence of receiving a serious wound, was very indignant at being roused from the[Pg 241] state of perfect bliss which he had enjoyed during the time. He affirmed that in the short interval he had visited his brother in Berlin, whom he found sitting in a bower under a large linden-tree, surrounded by his family and a few friends, and engaged in drinking coffee. Upon entering the garden, his brother had risen, advanced towards him and asked him what had brought him so unexpectedly to Berlin. A few days after the fainting-fit a letter arrived from that city, inquiring what could have happened on that day and at that hour, and reciting all that the old gentleman had reported as having been done during his unconsciousness! Nor had the latter been seen by his brother only, but quite as distinctly by the whole company present; his image had, however, vanished again as soon as his brother had attempted to touch him (Woetzel, p. 215). From his work we learn that he had begged his wife on her death-bed to appear to him after death, and she had promised to do so; but soon after her mind became so uneasy about the probable effects of her pledge, that her husband released her, and abandoned all thoughts on the subject. Several weeks later he was sitting in a locked room, when suddenly a heavy draught of air rushed through it, the light was nearly blown out, a small window in an alcove sounded as if it were opened, and in an instant the faint luminous form of his wife was standing before the amazed

widower. She said in a soft, scarcely audible voice: "Charles, I am immortal; we shall see each other[Pg 242] again." Woetzel jumped up and tried to seize the form, but it vanished like thin mist, and he felt a strong electric shock. He saw the same vision and heard the same words repeatedly; his wife appeared as he had last seen her lying in her coffin; the second time a dog, who had been often petted by her, wagged his tail and walked caressingly around the apparition. The book, which appeared in 1804, and gave a full account of all the phenomena, met with much opposition and contempt; a number of works were written against it, Wieland ridiculed it in his "Euthanasia," and others denounced it as a mere repetition of former statements. The author was, however, not abashed by the storm he had raised; he offered to swear to the truth of all he had stated before the Great Council of the University of Leipzig, and published a second work in which he developed his theory of ghosts with great ability. According to his view, the spirits of the departed are for some time after death surrounded by a luminous essence, which may, under peculiarly favorable circumstances, become visible to human eyes, but which, according to the weakness of our mind, is generally transformed by the imagination only into the more familiar form of deceased friends. He insists, besides, upon it that all he saw and heard was an impression made upon the outer senses only, and that nothing in the whole occurrence originated in his inner consciousness. As there was nothing to be gained for him by his persistent assertions, it seems[Pg 243] but fair to give them all the weight they may deserve, till the whole subject is more fully understood.

Another remarkable case is that of a Mr. and Mrs. James, at whose house the Rev. Mr. Mills, a Methodist preacher, was usually entertained when his duties brought him to their place of residence. One year he found they had both died since his last visit, but he staid with the orphaned children, and retired to the same room which he had always occupied. The adjoining room was the former chamber of the aged couple, and here he began soon to hear a whispering and moving about, just as he used to hear it when they were still alive. This recalled to him the reports he had heard in the town, that the departed had been frequently seen by their numerous friends and kinsmen. The next day he called upon a plain but very pious woman, who urged him to share her simple meal with her; he consented, but what was his amazement when she said to him at the close of the meal: "Now, Mr. Mills, I have a favor to ask of you. I want you to preach my funeral sermon next Sunday. I am going to die next Friday at three o'clock." When the astonished minister asked her to explain the strange request, she replied that Mr. and Mrs. James had come to her to tell her that they were ineffably happy, but still bound by certain ties to the world below. They had added that they had not died, as people believed, without disposing of their property, but that, in order to avoid dissensions among their children, they had been[Pg 244] allowed to return and to make the place known where the will was concealed. They had tried to confer with Mr. Mills, but his timidity had prevented it; now they had come to her, as the minister was going to dine that day at her house. Finally they had informed her of her approaching death on the day she had mentioned. The Methodist minister looked, aided by the heirs and a legal man, for the will and found it at the place indicated. Nanny, the poor woman, died on Friday, and her funeral sermon was preached by him on the following Sunday (Rechenberg, p. 182).

A certain Dr. T. Van Velseu published in 1870, in Dutch, a work, called *Christus Redivivus*, in which he relates a number of very remarkable appearances of deceased persons, and among these the following: "A friend of the author's, a man of sound, practical mind, and a declared enemy of all superstition, lost his mother whom he had most assiduously nursed for six weeks

and who died in full faith in her Redeemer. A few days later his nephew was to be married in a distant province, but although no near kinsman of his, except his mother, could be present, he, the uncle, could not make up his mind so soon after his grievous loss, to attend a wedding. This decision irritated and wounded his sister deeply and led to warm discussions, in which other relatives also took her side, and which threatened to cause a serious breach in the family. The mourner was deeply afflicted by the scene and at night, having laid the matter before God, he fell asleep with the[Pg 245] thought on his mind: 'What would your mother think of it?' Suddenly, while yet wide awake, he heard a voice saying: 'Go!' Although he recognized the voice instantly, he thought it might be his sister's and drew the bed-curtain aside, to see who was there. To his amazement he saw his mother's form standing by his bedside; terrified and bewildered he dropped the curtain, turned his face to the wall and tried to collect his thoughts, but at the same time he heard the same voice say once more: 'Go!' He drew the curtain again and saw his mother as before, looking at him with deep love and gentle urgency. This excites him so that he can control himself no longer; he jumps up and tries to seize the form—it draws back and gradually dissolves before his eye. Now only he recalls how often he has conversed with his mother about the future life and the possibility of communication after death; he becomes calm, decides to attend the wedding and sleeps soundly till the morning. The next day he finds his heart relieved of a sore burden; he joins his friends at the wedding and finds, to his infinite delight, that by his presence only a serious difficulty is avoided and peace is preserved in a numerous and influential family. In this case the effect of the mind on the imagination is strikingly illustrated, and although the vision of the mother may have existed purely in the son's mind, the practical result was precisely the same as if a spirit had really appeared in tangible shape so as to be seen by the outward eye."[Pg 246]

In some instances phenomena, like those described, are apparently the result of a disturbed conscience, and occur, therefore, in frequent repetition. Already Plutarch, in his "Life of Cimon," tells us that the Spartan general, Pausanias, had murdered a fair maiden, Cleonice, because she overthrew a torch in his tent and he imagined himself to be attacked by assassins. The ghost of the poor girl, whom he had dishonored in life and so foully killed, appeared to him and threatened him with such fearful disgrace, that he was terrified and hastened to Heraclea, where necromancers summoned the spirits of the departed by their vile arts. They called up Cleonice, at the great commander's request, and she replied reluctantly, that the curse would not leave him till he went to Sparta. Pausanias did so and found his death there, the only way, says the historian of the same name, in which he could ever be relieved of such fearful guilt. Baxter, also, tells us (p. 30) of a Rev. Mr. Franklin, whose young son repeatedly saw a lady and received at her hands quite painful correction. Thus, when he was bound apprentice to a surgeon, in 1661, and refused to return home upon being ordered to do so, she appeared to him, and when he resisted her admonitions, energetically boxed his ears. The poor boy was in bad health and seemed to suffer so much that at last the surgeon determined to consult his father, who lived on the island of Ely. On the morning of the day which he spent travelling, the boy cried out: "Oh, mistress, here's the lady again!"[Pg 247] and at the same time a noise as of a violent blow was heard. The child hung his head and fell back dead. In the same hour the surgeon and the boy's father, sitting together in consultation, saw a lady enter the room, glance at them angrily, walk up and down a few times and disappear again.

The fancy that murdered persons reappear in some shape after death for the purpose of wreaking their vengeance upon their enemies, is very common among all nations, and has often been

vividly embodied in legends and ballads. The stories of Hamlet and of Don Giovanni are based upon this belief, and the older chronicles abound with similar cases belonging to an age when violence was more frequent and justice less prompt than in our day. Thus we are told in the annals of the famous castle of Weinsberg in Suabia—justly renowned all over the world for the rare instance of marital attachment exhibited by its women—that a steward had wantonly murdered a peasant there. Thereupon disturbances of various kinds began to make the castle uninhabitable; a black shape was seen walking about and breathing hot and hateful odors upon all it met, while the steward became an object of special persecution. The townspeople at first were skeptic and laughed at his reports, but soon the black visitor was seen on the ramparts of the town also and created within the walls the same sensation as up at the castle. The good citizens at last observed a solemn fast-day and performed a pilgrimage to a holy shrine at[Pg 248] Heilbrum. But all was in vain, and the disturbances and annoyances increased in frequency and violence, till at last the unfortunate steward died from vexation and sorrow, when the whole ceased and peace was restored to town and castle alike (Crusius, "Suabian Chron." ii. p. 417).

Another case of this kind is connected with a curious token of gratitude exhibited by the gratified victim. A president of the Parliament of Toulouse, returning from Paris towards the end of the seventeenth century, was compelled by an accident to stop at a poor country tavern. During the night there appeared to him an old man, pale and bleeding, who declared that he was the father of the present owner of the house, that he had been murdered by his own son, cut to pieces, and buried in the garden. He appealed to the president to investigate the matter and to avenge his murder. The judge was so forcibly impressed by his vision that he ordered search to be made, and lo! the body of the murdered man was found, and the son, thunderstruck by the mysterious revelation, acknowledged his guilt, was tried, and in course of time died on the scaffold. But the murdered man was not satisfied yet; he showed himself once more to the president and asked how he could prove his gratitude? The latter asked to be informed of the hour of his death, that he might fitly prepare himself, and was promised that he should know it a week in advance. Many years afterwards a fierce knocking was heard at the[Pg 249] gate of the president's house in Toulouse; the porter opened but saw no one; the knocking was repeated, but this time also the servants who had rushed to the spot found nobody there; when it was heard a third time they were thoroughly frightened and hastened to inform their master. The latter went to the door and there saw the well-remembered form of his nightly visitor, who told him that he would die in eight days. He told his friends and his family what had happened, but only met with laughter, as he was in perfect health and nothing seemed more improbable than his sudden death. But as he sat, on the eighth day, at table with his family, a book was mentioned which he wished to see, and he got up to look for it in his library. Instantly a shot is heard; the guests rush out and find him lying on the floor and weltering in his blood. Upon inquiry it appeared that a man, desperately in love with the chamber-maid and jealous of a rival, had mistaken the president for the latter and murdered him with a pistol (De Ségur, *Galérie morale et politique*, p. 221).

Among the numerous accounts of visions which seem to have been caused by an instinctive and perfectly unconscious perception of human remains, the story of the Rev. Mr. Lindner, in Königsberg, is perhaps the best authenticated, and from the character of the man to whom the revelation was made, the most trustworthy. It is fully reported by Professor Ehrmann of Strasburg, in *Kies. Archiv.* x. iii., p. 143. The minister, a mod[Pg 250]est, pious man, awoke in the middle of the night, and saw, by the bright moonlight which was shining into the room, another minister in gown and bands, standing before his open bible, apparently searching for some

quotation. He had a small child in his arms, and a larger child stood by his side. After some time spent in speechless astonishment, Mr. Lindner exclaimed: "All good spirits praise God!" whereupon the stranger turned round, went up to him and offered three times to shake hands with him. Mr. Lindner, however, refused to do so, gazing at the same time intently at his features, and after a while he found himself looking at the air, for all had disappeared. It was a long time afterwards, when sauntering through the cloisters of his church, he was suddenly arrested by a portrait which bore all the features of the minister he had seen on that night. It was one of his predecessors in office, who had died nearly fifty years ago in rather bad odor, reports having been current at the time, as very old men still living testified, that he had had several illegitimate children, of whose fate nothing was known. But there was a still further sequel to the minister's strange adventure. In the course of the next year his study was enlarged, and for that purpose the huge German stove had to be removed; to the horror of the workmen and of Mr. Lindner, who was promptly called to the spot, the remains of several children were found carefully concealed beneath the solid structure. As there is no reason to suspect self-delusion in the reverend man, and the vision cannot well be[Pg 251] ascribed to any outward cause, it must be presumed that his sensitive nature was painfully affected by the skeletons in his immediate neighborhood, and that this unconscious feeling, acting through his imagination, gave form and shape to the impressions made upon his nerves.

In another case the principal person was a candidate of divinity, Billing, well known as being of a highly sensitive disposition and given to hallucinations; the extreme suffering which the presence of human remains caused to his whole system had been previously already observed. The great German fabulist, Pfeffel, a blind man, once took Billing's arm and went with him into the garden to take an airing. The poet noticed that when they came to a certain place, the young man hesitated and his arm trembled as if it had received an electric shock. When he was asked what was the matter, he replied, "Oh, nothing!" But upon passing over the spot a second time, the same tremor made itself felt. Pressed by Pfeffel, the young man at last acknowledged that he experienced at that spot the sensation which the presence of a corpse always produced in him, and offered to go there with the poet at night in order to prove to him the correctness of his feelings. When the two friends went to the garden after dark, Billing perceived at once a faint glimmer of light above the spot. He stopped at a distance of about ten yards, and after a while declared that he saw a female figure hovering above the place, about five feet[Pg 252] high, with the right arm across her bosom and the left hand hanging down by her side. When the poet advanced and stood on the fatal spot, the young man affirmed that the image was on his right or his left, before or behind him, and when Pfeffel struck around him with his cane, it produced the effect as if he were cutting through a flame which instantly reunited. The same phenomena were witnessed a second time by a number of Pfeffel's relations. Several days afterwards, while the young man was absent, the poet caused the place in the garden to be dug up, and at a depth of several feet, beneath a layer of lime, a human skeleton was discovered. It was removed, the hole filled up, and all smoothed over again. After Billing's return the poet took him once more into the garden, and this time the young man walked over the fatal spot without experiencing the slightest sensation (*Kieser, Archiv.*, etc., p. 326).

It was this remarkable experience which led Baron Reichenbach to verify it by leading one of his sensitive patients, a Miss Reichel, at night to the great cemetery of Vienna. As soon as she reached the place she perceived everywhere a sea of flames, brightest over the new graves, weaker over others, and quite faint here and there. In a few cases these lights reached a height of

nearly four feet, but generally they had more the appearance of luminous mists, so that her hand, held over the place where she saw one, seemed to be enveloped in a cloud of fire. She was in no way troubled[Pg 253] by the phenomena, which she had often previously observed, and Baron Reichenbach thought he saw in them a confirmation of his theory about the Od-light. There can be, however, little doubt that the luminous appearance, perceptible though it be only to unusually sensitive persons, is the result of chemical decomposition, which has a peculiar influence over these persons.

Hence, no doubt, the numerous accounts of will-o'-the-wisps and ghostly lights seen in graveyards; the frightened beholder is nearly always laughed at or heartily abused, and more than one poor child has fallen a victim to the absurd theory of "curing it of foolish fears." There can be no doubt that light does appear flickering above churchyards, and that there is something more than mere idle superstition in the "corpse-candles" of the Welsh and in the "elf-candles" of the Scotch, which are seen, with foreboding weight, in the house of sickness, betokening near dissolution. At the same time, it is well known that living persons also have, under certain circumstances, given out light, and especially from their head. The cases of Moses, whose face shone with unbearable brightness, and of the martyr Stephen, are familiar to all, and the halo with which artists surround the heads of saints bears eloquent evidence of the universal and deeply-rooted belief. But science also has fully established the fact that light appears as a real and unmistakable luminous efflux from the human body, alike in health and in[Pg 254] mortal sickness. By far the most common case of such emission of light is the emission of sparks from the hair when combed. Before and during the electrical "dust-storms" in India, this phenomenon is of frequent occurrence in the hair of both sexes. In dry weather, and when the hair also is dry, and especially immediately before thunderstorms, the same sparks are seen in all countries. Dr. Phipson mentions the case of a relative of his, "whose hair (exactly one yard and a quarter long), when combed somewhat rapidly with a black gutta-percha comb, emits sheets of light upward of a foot in length," the light being "composed of hundreds of small electric sparks, the snapping noise of which is distinctly heard."

But electric light is sometimes given off by the human body itself, not merely from the hair. A memorable instance of this phenomenon is recorded by Dr. Kane in the journal of his last voyage to the Polar regions. He and a companion, Petersen, had gone to sleep in a hut during intense cold, and on awaking in the night, found, to their horror, that their lamp—their only hope—had gone out. Petersen tried in vain to get light from a pocket-pistol, and then Kane resolved to take the pistol himself. "It was so intensely dark," he says, "that I had to grope for it, and in so doing, I touched his hand. At that instant the pistol—in Petersen's hand—became distinctly visible. A pale bluish light, slightly tremulous, but not broken, covered the metallic parts of it. The stock, too, was distinctly visible as if by reflected light, and to the[Pg 255] amazement of both of us, also the thumb and two fingers with which Petersen was holding it—the creases, wrinkles and circuit of nails being clearly defined upon the skin. As I took the pistol my hand became illuminated also." This luminous and doubtless electric phenomenon took place in highly exceptional circumstances, and is the only case recorded in recent times. But a far more remarkable phenomenon of a similar kind is mentioned by Bartholin, who gives an account of a lady in Italy, whom he rightly styles *mulier splendens*, whose body became phosphorescent—or rather shone with electric radiations—when slightly rubbed with a piece of dry linen. In this case the luminosity appears to have been normal, certainly very frequent under ordinary circumstances, and the fact is well attested. Mr. B. H. Patterson mentions in the journal

Belgravia (Oct., 1872), that he saw the flannel with which he had rubbed his body, emit blue sparks, while at the same time he heard a "crackling" sound. These facts prove that the human body even in ordinary life, is capable of giving out luminous undulations, while science teaches us that they appear quite frequently in disease. Here again, Dr. Phipson mentions several cases as the result of his reading. One of these is that of a woman in Milan, during whose illness a so-called phosphoric light glimmered about her bed. Another remarkable case is recorded by Dr. Marsh, in a volume on the "Evolution of Light from the Human Subject," and reads thus: "About an hour and a half before my sister's death,[Pg 256] we were struck by luminous appearances proceeding from her head in a diagonal direction. She was at the time in a half-recumbent position, and perfectly tranquil. The light was pale as the moon, but quite evident to mamma, myself, and sisters, who were watching over her at the time. One of us at first thought it was lightning, till shortly afterwards we perceived a sort of tremulous glimmer playing around the head of the bed, and then, recollecting that we had read something of a similar nature having been observed previous to dissolution, we had candles brought into the room, fearing that our dear sister would perceive the luminosity, and that it might disturb the tranquillity of her last moments."

The other case relates to an Irish peasant, and is recorded from personal observation by Dr. Donovan, in the *Dublin Medical Press*, in 1870, as follows: "I was sent to see Harrington in December. He had been under the care of my predecessor, and had been entered as a phthisical patient. He was under my care for about five years, and I had discontinued my visits, when the report became general that mysterious lights were seen every night in his cabin. The subject attracted a great deal of attention. I determined to submit the matter to the ordeal of my own senses, and for this purpose I visited the cabin for fourteen nights. On three nights only I witnessed anything unusual. Once I perceived a luminous fog resembling the aurora borealis; and twice I saw scintillations like the sparkling phosphorescence ex[Pg 257]hibited by sea-infusoria. From the close scrutiny I made, I can with certainty say, that no imposition was either employed or attempted."

The only explanation ever offered by competent authority of the luminous radiations from persons in disease, ascribes them to an efflux or escape of the nerve-force, which is known to be kindred in its nature to electricity, transmuting itself into luminosity as it leaves the body. The Seeress of Prevorst reported that she saw the nerves as shining threads, and even from the eyes of some persons rays of light seemed to her to flash continually. Other somnambulists also, as well as mesmerized persons, have seen the hair of persons shine with a multitude of sparks, while the breath of their mouth appeared as a faint luminous mist.

The same luminosity is, finally, perceived at times in graveyards, and would, no doubt, have led to careful investigation more frequently, if observers had not so often been suspected of superstitious apprehensions. In the case of Baron Reichenbach's patients, however, no such difficulty was to be feared; they saw invariably light, bluish flames hovering over many graves, and what made the phenomena more striking still, was the fact that these moving lights were only seen on recent graves, as if naturally dependent upon the process of decomposition. If we connect this with our experience of luminosity seen in decaying vegetables, in spoiled meat, and in diseased persons, we shall be prepared to believe that even so-called ghost stories, in which mys[Pg 258]terious lights play a prominent part, are by no means necessarily without foundation.

Cases in which deceased persons have made themselves known to survivors, or have produced, by some as yet unexplained agency, an impression upon them through other senses than the sight, are very rare. Occasionally, however, the hearing is thus affected, and sweet music is heard, in token, as it were, of the continued intercourse between the dead and the living. One instance may serve as an illustration.

The Countess A. had all her life been remarkable for the strange delight she took in clocks; not a room in her castle but had its large or small clock, and all these she insisted upon winding up herself at the proper time. Her favorite, however, was a very curious and most costly clock in her sitting-room, which had the form of a Gothic church, and displayed in the steeple a small dial, behind which the works were concealed; at the full hour a hymn was played by a kind of music-box attached to the mechanism. She allowed no one to touch this clock, and used to sit before it, as the hand approached the hour, waiting for the hymn to be heard. At last she was taken ill and confined for seven weeks, during which the clock could not be wound up, and then she died. For special reasons the interment had to take place on the evening of the next day, and, as the castle was far from any town, the preparations took so much time that it was nearly midnight before the body could be moved from the bedroom to the drawing-[Pg 259]room, where the usual ceremonies were to be performed. The transfer was accomplished under the superintendence of her husband, who followed the coffin, and in the presence of a large number of friends and dependents, while the minister led the sad cortége. At the moment when the coffin approached the favorite clock, it suddenly began to strike; but instead of twelve, it gave out thirteen strokes, and then followed the melody of a well-known hymn:

"Let us with boldness now proceedOn the dark path to a new life."

The minister, who happened to have been sitting a little while before by the count's side, just beneath the clock, and had mournfully noticed its silence after so many years, was thunderstruck, and could not recover his self-control for some time. The count, on the contrary, saw in the accident a solemn warning from on high, and henceforth laid aside the frivolity which he had so far shown in his life as well as in his principles ("Evening Post" [Germ.], 1840. No. 187).

There are finally certain phenomena belonging to this part of magic, which have been very generally attributed to an agency in which natural forces and supernatural beings held a nearly equal share. They suggest the interesting but difficult question, whether visions and ecstasy can extend to large numbers of men at once? And yet without some such supposition the armies in the clouds, the wild huntsman of the Ardennes, and like appearances cannot well be explained.[Pg 260] Here also no little weight must be attached to ancient superstitions which have become, as it were, a part of a nation's faith. Thus all Northern Germany has from the earliest days been familiar with the idea of the great Woden ranging through its dark forests, at the head of the Walkyries and the heroes fallen in battle, while his wolves and his raven followed him on his nightly course. When Christianity changed the old gods of the German race into devils and demons, Woden became very naturally the wild huntsman, who was now escorted by men of violence, bloody tyrants, and criminals, often grievously mutilated or altogether headless. There can be little doubt but that these visions also rested upon some natural substructure: exceptional atmospheric disturbances, hurricanes coming from afar and crashing through mighty forests, or even the modest tramp of a band of poachers heard afar off, under favorable circumstances by

timid ears. The very fact that the favorite time for such phenomena is the winter solstice favors this supposition. They are, however, by no means limited to seasons and days, for as late as 1842 a number of wheat-cutters left in a panic the field in which they were engaged, because they believed they heard Frau Holle with her hellish company, and saw Faithful Eckhard, as he walked steadily before the procession, warning all he met to stand aside and escape from the fatal sight. An occurrence of the kind, which took place in 1857, was fortunately fully explained by careful observers: the cause was an immense[Pg 261] flock of wild geese, whose strange cries resembled in a surprising manner the barking of a pack of hounds during a hunt. Another occurrence during the night of January 30, 1849, threw the whole neighborhood of Basle in Switzerland into painful consternation. The air was suddenly filled with a multitude of whining voices, whose agony pierced the hearts of all who heard them; men and beasts seemed to be suffering unutterable anguish, and to be driven with furious speed from the mountain-side into a valley near Magden; here all ended in an instant amid rolling thunder and fearful flashes of lightning. A fierce storm arising in distant clefts and crevices, and carrying possibly fragments of rock, ice, and moraine along with it, seems here to have been the determining cause.

Another class of phenomena of this kind relates to the great battles that have at times decided the fate of the world. Thus Pausanias already tells us ("Attica," 32), and so do other historians of Greece, how the Plain of Marathon resounded for nearly four centuries every year with the clash of arms and the cries of soldiers. It was evidently the deep and lasting impression made upon a highly sensitive nation, which here was bequeathed from generation to generation, and on the day of the battle, when all was excitement, resulted in the perception of sounds which had no real existence. Events of such colossal proportions, which determine in a few hours the fate of great nations, leave naturally a powerful impress upon contemporaries not only, but[Pg 262] also upon the children of that race. Such was, among others, the fearful battle on the Catalaunian Fields, in which the Visi-Goths and Aetius conquered Attila, and one hundred and sixty-two thousand warriors were slain. It was at the time reported that the intense bitterness and exasperation of the armies continued even after the battle, and that for three days the spirits of the fallen were contending with each other with unabated fury. The report grew into a legend, till a firm belief was established that the battle was fought year after year on the memorable day, and that any visitor might behold the passionate spirits as they rose from their graves, armed with their ancient weapons and filled with undiminished fury. One by one the soldiers of the two armies, it was said, leave their lowly graves, rise high into the air, and engage in deadly but silent strife, till they vanish in the clouds. It is well known how successfully the great German painter, Kaulbach, has reproduced the vision in his magnificent fresco of the "Hunnenschlacht." In other countries these ghostly visions assume different forms. Thus the neighborhood of Kerope, in Livonia, is in like manner renowned for a long series of fearful butcheries during the wars between the German knights and the Muscovites. There also, night after night, the shadowy battle is fought over again; but the clashing of arms and the hoarse war-cries are distinctly heard, and the pious traveler hastens away from the blood-soaked plains, uttering his prayers for the souls of the slain. In the[Pg 263] Highlands of Scotland also, and on the adjoining islands, most weird and gruesome sights have been watched by young and old in every generation. The dark, dismal atmosphere of those regions, the dense fogs and impenetrable mists, now rising from the sea, and now descending from the mountains, and the fierce, inclement climate, have all combined for ages to predispose the mind for the perception of such strange and mysterious phenomena. Nearly every clan and every family has its own particular ghost, and besides these the whole nation claims a number of common visions and prophetic spirits, whose harps and

wild songs are heard faintly and fearfully sounding on high. A friend of Mr. Martin, the author of a work on "Second Sight," used to recite several stanzas belonging to such a prophetic song, which he had heard himself on a sad November day, as it came to him through the drooping clouds and sweeping mists from the summit of a lonely mountain. At funerals also, wonderful voices were heard high in the air, as they accompanied the chanting of the people below, with a music not born upon earth, and filling the heart with strange but sweet sadness. Nearly the same visions are seen and the same songs are heard in Sweden and Norway, proving conclusively that like climatic influences produce also a similar magic life, in individuals not only, but in whole nations. For even if we are disposed to look upon these phenomena as merely strange appearances of clouds and mists, accompanied by the howling[Pg 264] and whistling of the wind and the tumbling down of rocks and gravel, there remains the uniformity with which thousands of every generation interpret these sights and sounds into weird visions and solemn chantings.

It is, however, not quite so evident why the peculiar class of visions which is often erroneously called second sight—the beholding of a "double"—should be almost entirely confined to these same northern regions. It is, of course, not unknown to other lands also, and even Holy Writ seems to justify the presumption that the idea of a "double" was familiar to the people of Palestine. For the poor damsel Rhoda, who "for gladness" did not open the door at which Peter knocked, after he had been miraculously liberated, but ran to announce his presence to the friends who were assembled at the house of Mark's brother, was first called mad, and then told: "It is his angel" (Acts xii. 13). They evidently meant, not that it was the spirit of their deceased friend, since they would have been made aware of his death, but a phantom representing his living body. But the number of authentic cases of persons who have seen their own form, is vastly greater at the North than anywhere else. The Celtic superstition of the "fetch," as the appearance of a person's "double" is there called, is too well known to require explanation. But the vision itself is one of the most interesting in the study of magic, since it exhibits most strikingly the great power which the human soul may, under peculiar[Pg 265] circumstances, gain and exercise over its own self, leading to complete self-delusion.

A case in which this strange abdication of all self-control led to most desirable consequences, is mentioned by Dr. Mayo. A young man recently from Oxford once saw a friend of his enter the room in which he was dining with some companions. The new comer, just returning from hunting, seemed to them to look unusually pale and was evidently in a state of great excitement. After much urging he at last confessed that he had been seriously disturbed in mind by a man who had kept him close company all the way home. This stranger, on horseback like himself, had been his exact image, down to a new bridle, his own invention, which he had tried that day for the first time. He fancied that this "double" was his own ghost and an omen of his impending death. His friends advised him to confer with the head of his college; this was done, and the latter gave him much good advice, adding the hope that the warning would not be allowed to pass unimproved. It is certain that the apparition made so strong an impression upon the young man as to lead to his entire reformation, at least for a time.

It is claimed by many writers that there are persons who continually have visions, because they live in constant communication with spirits, although in all cases they have to pay a fearful penalty for this sad privilege. They are invariably diseased people, mostly women, who fall into trances, have cataleptic attacks, or suffer of[Pg 266] even more painful maladies, and during the time of their affliction behold and converse with the inmates of another world. The most renowned of these seers was a Mrs. Hauffe, who has become well known to the reading world

through Dr. J. Kerner's famous work, "The Seeress of Prevorst." A peculiar feature in her case was the fact that the visions she had were invariably announced to bystanders by peculiar sounds, heard by all who were present. The forms assumed by her mysterious visitors varied almost infinitely; now it was a man in a brown gown, and now a woman in white. Often, when the spirits appeared in the open air, and she tried to escape from them by running, she was bodily lifted up and hurried along so fast that her companions could not keep pace with her. It was only later in life that she fell as a patient into the hands of Dr. Kerner, who was quite distinguished as a poet, and had a great renown as a physician for insane people of a special class. His house at Weinsberg in Würtemberg, was filled to overflowing with persons of all classes of society, from the highest to the lowest, and all had visions. Nor was the doctor himself excluded; he also was a seer, and has given in the above-mentioned book a full and most interesting account of the diseases in connection with which magic phenomena are most frequently observed. By the aid of careful observation of actual facts, and using such revelations vouchsafed to him and others as he believed fully trustworthy, he formed a regular theory of visions. First of all he admits that[Pg 267] the privilege of communing with spirits is a grievous affliction, and that all of his more thoughtful patients continually prayed to be delivered of the burden. It is evident from all he states that not only the body, but the mind also suffers—and in many cases suffers unto destruction—under the effects of such exceptional powers; that in fact the lines of separation between this life and another life can never be crossed with impunity. His most interesting patient, Mrs. Hauffe, presents the usual mixture of mere fanciful imagery with occasional flashes of truth; her genuine revelations were marvelous, and can only be explained upon the ground of real magic; but with them are mixed up the most absurd theories and the most startling contradictions. She insisted, however, upon the fact that only those spirits could commune with mortal man who were detained in the middle realm—between heaven and hell—the spirits of men who were in this life unable, though not unwilling, to believe that "God could forgive their sins for the sake of Christ's death." She was often tried by Dr. Kerner and others; she was told that certain still living persons had died, and asked to summon their spirits, but she was never misled. There can be no doubt that the poor woman was sincere in her statements; but she was apparently unable to distinguish between real visions in a trance and the mere offspring of her imagination. That her peculiarities were closely connected with her bodily condition is, moreover, proved by the fact that her whole family suffered[Pg 268] in similar manner and enjoyed similar powers; a brother and a sister, as well as her young son, all had visions and heard mysterious noises. The latter were, in fact, perceptible to all the inmates of the strange house; even the great skeptic, Dr. Strausz, who once visited it, heard "long, fearful groanings" close to his amiable hostess, who had fallen asleep on her sofa. Nor were the ghosts content with disturbing the patients and their excellent physician; they made themselves known to their friends and neighbors, also, and even the good minister in the little town had much to suffer from nightly knockings and strange utterances.

Dr. Kerner himself heard many spirits, but saw only one, and that only as "a grayish pillar;" on the other hand he witnessed countless mysterious phenomena which occurred in his patients' bedrooms. Now he beheld Mrs. Hauffe's boots pulled off by invisible hands, while she herself was lying almost inanimate, in a trance, on her bed, and now he heard her reveal secrets which, upon writing to utterly unknown persons at a great distance, proved to be correctly stated. What makes a thorough investigation of all these phenomena peculiarly difficult, is the fact that Dr. Kerner's house became an asylum for somnambulists as well as for real patients, and that by this mixture the scientific value of his observations, as regards their psychological interest, is

seriously impaired. He himself was a sincere believer in magic phenomena; almost all of his friends and neighbors, from the humblest peasant to[Pg 269] the most cultivated men of science, believed in him and his statements, and there can be no doubt that astonishing revelations were made and extraordinary powers became manifest in his house. But here, also, the difficulty of separating the few grains of truth from the great mass of willful, as well as of unconscious delusion, is almost overwhelming, and our final judgment must be held in suspense, till more light has been thrown on the subject. Dr. Kerner's son, who succeeded his father at his death in 1862, still keeps up the remarkable establishment at Weinsberg; but exclusively for the cure of certain diseases by magnetism.[Pg 270]

VI.

DIVINATION.

"There shall not be found among you any one that useth divination."—DEUT. xviii. 9.

The usual activity of our mind is limited to the perception of the world around us, and its life, as far as the power of our senses reaches; it must, therefore, necessarily be confined within the limits of space and time. There are, however, specially favored men among us who profess an additional power, or even ordinary men may be thus endowed under peculiar circumstances, as when they are under the influence of nervous affections, trances, or even merely in an unusual state of excitement. Then they are no longer subject to the usual laws of distance in space, or remoteness in time; they perceive as immediately present what lies beyond the reach of others, and the magic power by which this is accomplished is called Divination. This vision is never quite clear, nor always complete or correct, for even such exceptionable powers are in all cases more or less subject to the imperfections of our nature; habitual notions, an ill-executed imagination, and often a disordered state of the system, all interfere with its perfect success. These imperfections, moreover, not only affect the value of such magic perceptions, but obscure the genuine features by a num[Pg 271]ber of false statements and of erroneous impressions, which quite legitimately excite a strong prejudice against the whole subject. Hence, especially, the rigor of the Church against divination in every form; it has ever ascribed the errors mixed up with the true parts of such revelations to the direct influence of the Evil One. The difficulty, however, arises that such magic powers have nothing at all to do with the question of morality; the saint and the criminal may possess them alike, since they are elements of our common nature, hidden in the vast majority of cases, and coming into view and into life only in rare exceptional instances.

Divination, as freed from the ordinary limits of our perceptions, appears either as clairvoyance, when things are seen which are beyond the range of natural vision, or as prophecy, when the boundary lines of time are overstepped. The latter appears again in its weakest form as a mere anticipation of things to come, or rises to perfection in the actual foretelling of future events. It is sad enough to learn from the experience of all nations that the occurrences thus foreseen are almost invariably great misfortunes, yet our surprise will cease if we remember that the tragic in

life exercises by far the greatest influence on our mind, and excites it far beyond all other events. Nor must we overlook the marvelous unanimity with which such magic powers are admitted to exist in Man by all nations on earth. The explanation, also, is invariably the same, namely, that Man possessed originally the command over space[Pg 272] and time as well as God himself, but that when sin came into the world and affected his earth-born body, this power was lost, and preserved only to appear in exceptional and invariably most painful cases. So thought the ancients even long before revelation had spoken. They believed that Man had had a previous god-like existence before appearing upon earth, where he was condemned to expiate the sins of his former life, while his immortal and divine soul was chained to a perishing earthy body. Plato, Plutarch, and Pythagoras, Cicero (in his book *De Divinatione*), and even Porphyrius, all admit without hesitation the power of divination, and speak of its special vigor in the moments preceding death. Melanchthon ascribed warning dreams to the prophetic power of the human soul. Brierre de Boismont also is forced to admit that not all cases of clairvoyance and prophesying are the results of hallucination by diseased persons; he speaks, on the contrary, and in spite of his bitter skepticism, of instances in which the increased powers of perception are the effect of "supernatural intuition."

One of the most prolific sources of error in Divination has ever been the variety of means employed for the purpose of causing the preparatory state of trance. It is well known in our day that the mind may be most strangely affected by innumerable agencies which are apparently purely mechanical, and often utterly absurd. Such are an intent gazing at highly-polished surfaces of metal, or into the bright inside of a gold[Pg 273] cup, at the shining sides of a crystal, or the varying hues of a glass globe; now vessels filled with pure water, and now ink poured into the hand of a child, answer the same purpose. Fortune-telling from the lines of the hand or the chance combinations of playing-cards are, in this aspect, on a par with the prophecies of astrologers drawn from the constellations in the heavens. It need hardly be added that this almost infinite variety of more or less absurd measures has nothing at all to do with the awaking of magic power, and continues in use only from the prestige which some of the means, like the cup of Joseph and the mirror of Varro, derive from their antiquity. Their sole purpose is uniformly to withdraw the seer's attention from all outward objects, and to make him, by steadily gazing at one and the same object, concentrate his thoughts and feelings exclusively upon his own self. Experience has taught that such efforts, long continued, result finally in utter loss of feeling, in unconsciousness, and frequently even in catalepsy. It is generally only under such peculiarly painful circumstances that the unusual powers of our being can become visible and begin to operate. While these results may be obtained, as recent experiments have proved, even by mere continued squinting, barbarous nations employ the most violent means for the same purpose—the whirling of dervishes, the drumming and dancing of northern shamans, the deafening music of the Moors, are all means of the same kind to excite the[Pg 274] rude and fierce nature of savages to a state of excessive excitement. In all cases, however, we must notice the comparative sterility of such divination, and the penalty which has to be paid for most meagre results by injuries inflicted upon the body, and by troubles caused in the mind, which, if they do not become fatal to life, are invariably so to happiness and peace. That the sad privilege may have to be paid for with life itself, we learn already from Plutarch's account of a priestess who became so furious while prophesying, that not only the strangers but the priests themselves fled in dismay, while she herself expired a few hours later (II. p. 438).

The state in which all forms of divination are most apt to show themselves is by theologians called *ecstasis*, when it is caused by means specially employed for the purpose and appears as a literally "being beside one's self"; by its side they speak of *raptus*, when the abnormal state suddenly begins during an act of ordinary life, such as walking, working, or even praying. The distinction is of no value as to the nature of the magic powers themselves, which are in all cases the same; it refers exclusively to the outer form.

One of the simplest methods is the Deasil-walking of the Scotch Highlanders: the seer walks rapidly three times, with the sun, around the person whose future is to be foretold, and thus produces a trance, in which his magic powers become available. Walter Scott's "Chronicles of the Canongate" gives a full account of this cere[Pg 275]mony. Robin Oig's aunt performs the ceremony, and then warns him in great terror, that she has seen a bloody dagger in his hand, stained with English blood, and beseeches him to stay at home. He disregards the omen, kills the same night an Englishman, a cattle-dealer, and pays for the crime with his life.

In the East, on the contrary, the usual form is to employ a young boy, taken at haphazard from the street, and to force him to gaze intently at Indian ink poured into the hollow of the hand, at molten lead, wax poured into cold water, the paten of a priest or a shining sword, with which several men have been killed. General readers will recall the famous boy of Cairo, who saw thus, in the dark, glittering surface of ink, the great Nelson—curiously enough as in a mirror, for he reported the image to be without the left arm and to wear the left sleeve across the breast, while the great admiral had lost his right arm and wore the right sleeve suspended. Burke, in his amusing "Anecdotes of the Aristocracy," etc. (I. p. 124), relates how the "magician" Magraubin in Alexandria appeared with a ten-year-old Coptic boy before the officers of H. M's. ship *Vanguard*. After burning much incense and uttering many unintelligible formulas he rolled a paper in the shape of a cornucopia, filled it with ink, and bade the boy tell them what he saw. As usual, he saw first a broom sweeping, and was thoroughly frightened. When a young midshipman asked him to inquire what would be his fate, he described instantly a sailor with gold on the shoulders,[Pg 276] fighting against Indians till he fell dead; then came friends and buried him under a tree on a hill. The midshipman, Croker, returned home, abandoned the sea, and became a landowner in one of the midland counties of England, where he often laughed at the absurd prediction. Long years afterwards, however, when there was a sudden want of seamen, he was recalled into service and sent on a long cruise. He rose to become a captain, and while in command of a frigate fell, upon the island of Tongataboo, in a skirmish with the natives, whereupon he was interred there under a lofty palm-tree which stood on a commanding eminence. The same author repeats (I. p. 357) the well-known story of Lady Eleanor Campbell, which is in substance as follows:

Poor Lady Primrose, a daughter of the second Earl of Loudoun, had for years endured the saddest lot that can befall a noble woman: she had been bound by marriage to a husband whose dissolute habits and untamable passions inspired her with fear, while his short love for her had long since turned into bitter hatred. At last he formed the resolution to rid himself forever of his wife, whose very piety and gentleness were a standing reproof to his villainy. By a rare piece of good luck she was awake when he came from his deep potations, a bare sword in his hand, and ready to kill her; she saw him in the mirror before which she happened to be sitting, and escaped by jumping from a window and hastening to her husband's own mother. After this[Pg 277] attempt at her life he disappeared, no one knew whither, but the poor lady, forsaken and yet not a widow, could not prevent her thoughts from dwelling, by day and by night, year after year, upon the

image of her unfortunate husband and his probable fate in foreign lands. It was, therefore, not without a pardonable interest that she heard, one winter, people talk of a foreigner who had suddenly appeared in Canongate and created a great sensation throughout Edinburgh by his success in showing to inquiring visitors what their absent friends were doing. Her intense anxiety about her husband and her natural desire to ascertain whether she was still a wife or already a widow, combined to tempt her to call on the magician; she went, therefore, with a friend, both disguised in the tartans and plaids of their maids. Before they reached the obscure alley to which they had been directed, they lost their way, and were standing helpless, exposed to the cold, stormy weather, when suddenly a deep voice said to them: "You are mistaken, ladies, this is not your way!" "How so?" asked Lady Primrose, addressing a tall, gentlemanly looking man, with a stern face of deep olive color, in which a pair of black eyes shone like stars, and dressed in an elegant but foreign-looking costume. The answer came promptly: "You are mistaken in your way, because it lies yonder, and in your disguise, because it does not conceal you from him who can lift the veil of the Future!" Then followed a short conversation in which the stranger made himself[Pg 278] known as the magician whom they were about to visit, and, by some words whispered into the lady's ear, as a man who not only recognized her as Lady Primrose, but who also was perfectly well acquainted with all the intimate details of her history. Amazed and not a little frightened, the two ladies accepted his courteous invitation to follow him, entered the house, and were shown into a simply furnished room, where the stranger begged them to wait for him, till all was ready for the ceremony by which alone he could satisfy their curiosity. After a short pause he reappeared in the traditional costume of a magician, a long tunic of black velvet which left his breast, arms, and hands free, and requested Lady Primrose to follow him into the adjoining room. After some little hesitation she left her companion and entered the room, which was perfectly plain, offering nothing to attract the eye save the dark curtains before the windows, an old-fashioned arm-chair, and a kind of altar of black marble, over which a large and beautiful mirror was suspended. Before the latter stood a small oven, in which some unknown substance burnt with a blue light, which alone feebly lighted up the room. The visitor was requested to sit down, to invoke help from above, and to abstain from uttering a sound, if she valued her life and that of the magician. After some simple but apparently most important ceremonies, the magician threw a pinch of red powder upon the flame, which instantly changed into bright crimson, while a few plaintive sounds were heard and red clouds[Pg 279] seemed to rise before the mirror, broken at short intervals by vivid flashes of lightning. As the mist dispersed the glass exhibited to the lady's astonished eye the interior of a church, first in vague outlines undulating as passing clouds seemed to set them in motion, but soon distinctly and clear in the minutest details. Then a priest appeared with his acolytes at the altar, and a wedding party was seen standing before him, among whom Lady Primrose soon recognized her faithless husband. Before she could recover from her painful surprise she saw a stranger hastily entering the church, wrapped in his cloak; at the moment when the priest, who had been performing the usual ceremony, was about to join the hands of the couple before him, the unknown dropped his cloak and rushed forward. Lady Primrose saw it was her own brother, who drew his sword and attacked her husband; suddenly a thrust was made by the latter which threatened to be fatal, and the poor lady cried out: "Great God, they will kill my brother!" She had no sooner uttered these words than the whole scene in the mirror became dim and blurred, the clouds rose again and formed dense masses, and soon the glass resumed its ordinary brightness and the flame its faint blue color. The magician, apparently much excited, informed the lady that all was over, and that they had escaped a most fearful danger, incurred by her

imprudence in speaking. He would accept no reward, stating that he had merely wished to oblige her, but would not have dared do so[Pg 280] much, if he had foreseen the peril to which they had both been exposed. Lady Primrose, accompanied by her friend, reached home in a state of extreme excitement, but immediately wrote down the hour and the day of her strange adventure, with a full account of all she had seen in the magic mirror. The paper thus drawn up she sealed in the presence of her companion and hid it in a secret drawer. Not long afterwards her brother returned from the Continent, but for some time refused to speak at all of her husband; it was only after being long and urgently pressed by the poor lady, that he consented to tell her, how he had heard of Lord Primrose's intention to marry a very wealthy lady in Amsterdam, how by mere chance he had entered the church where the marriage ceremony was to be performed, and how he had come out just in time to prevent his brother-in-law from committing bigamy. They had fought for a few minutes without doing each other any injury, and after being separated, he had remained, while Lord Primrose had disappeared, no one knew whither. Upon comparing dates and circumstances, it appeared that the mirror had presented the scene faithfully in all its details; but the ceremony had taken place in the morning, the visit to the magician at night, so that the latter had, after all, only revealed an event already completed. There remains, however, the difficulty of accounting for the means by which in those days—about 1700—an event in Amsterdam could[Pg 281] possibly have been known in Edinburgh, the night of the same day on which it occurred.

In France, under Louis XIV., a glass of water was most frequently used as a mirror in which to read the future. The Duke of St. Simon reports that the Duke of Orleans was thus informed that he would one day become Regent of France. The Abbé Choisy mentions a remarkable occurrence which took place at the house of the Countess of Soissons, a niece of the great Cardinal Mazarin. Her husband was lying sick in the province of Champagne, and she was anxious to know whether she ought to undertake the long and perilous journey to him or not; in this dilemma a friend offered to send for a diviner, who should tell her the issue of her husband's illness. He brought her a little girl, five years old, who, in the presence of a number of distinguished persons of both sexes, began, under the nobleman's direction, to tell what she saw in a glass of water. When she began by saying that the water looked as if it were troubled, the poor lady was so frightened that her friend suggested he would ask the spirit to show the child not her husband himself, but a white horse, if the Count was dead, and a tiger if he was alive. Then he asked the girl what she saw now? "Ah!" she cried out at once, "what a pretty white horse!" The company, however, refused to be content with one trial; five times in succession the test was altered, and in such a manner that the little child could not possibly be aware of the choice, but in each case the[Pg 282] answer was unfavorable to the absent Count. It appeared, afterwards, that he had really died a day or two before the consultation. One of the most striking cases of such exceptional endowment was a Frenchman, Cahagnet, who in his work, *Lumière des Morts* (Paris, 1851), claimed to see remote objects and persons. He used to make a mental effort, upon which his eyes became fixed and he saw objects at a great distance, reading the title and discerning the precise shape of books in public libraries, or watching absent friends engaged in unusual occupations! This state of clairvoyance, however, never lasted more than sixty seconds, nor could he ever see the same object twice—limitations of his endowment which secured for him greater credit than he would have otherwise possessed. Occasionally he would assist the effort he had to make by fixedly gazing at some shining object, such as a small flaw in a mirror or a glass. Another restraint under which he labored, and which yet increased the faith of others, consisted in this, that such sights as presented themselves spontaneously to him proved

invariably to be true, while the visions which he purposely evoked were not unfrequently unfounded in fact.

Among recent magicians of this class, a Parisian, Edmond, is perhaps the most generally known. He is a man without education, who leads a life of asceticism, and is said to equal the famous Lennormand in his ability to guess the future by gazing intently at certain cards. The latter, although not free from the charge[Pg 283] of charlatanism, possessed undoubtedly the most extraordinary talent of divining the thoughts of those who came to consult her, and an almost marvelous tact in connecting the knowledge thus obtained with the events of the day. She began her career already as a young girl at a convent-school, where her playmates asked her laughing who would be the next abbess, and she mentioned an entirely unknown lady from Picardy as the one that would be appointed by the king. Contrary to all expectations the favorite candidates were put aside, and the unknown lady appointed, although eighteen months elapsed before her prophecy was fulfilled. As early as 1789 she predicted the overthrow of the French government, and during the Revolution her reputation was such that the first men of the land came to consult her. The unfortunate princess Lamballe and Mirabeau, Mme. de Staël and the king himself, all appeared in her stately apartments. Her efforts to save the queen, to whose prison she managed to obtain access, were unsuccessful; but when her aristocratic connections caused her to be imprisoned herself, even the noble and virtuous Mme. Tallien sought her society. The new dynasty, whose members were almost without exception more or less superstitious, as it is the nature of all Corsicans, consulted her frequently; the great Napoleon came to her in 1793, when he was disgusted with France, and on the point of leaving the country; he sent for her a second time in 1801 to confer with her at Malmaison,[Pg 284] and the fair Josephine actually conceived for her a deep and lasting attachment. Afterwards, however, she became as obnoxious to the Emperor as his inveterate enemy, Mme. de Staël; she was repeatedly sent to prison because she predicted failures, as in the case of the projected invasion of England, or because she revealed the secret plans of Napoleon. The Emperor Alexander of Russia also consulted her in 1818, and of the Prussian king, Frederick William III., it is at least reported that he visited her incognito. After the year 1830 she appeared but rarely in her character as a diviner; she had become old and rich, and did not perhaps wish to risk her world-wide reputation by too numerous revelations. She maintained, however, for the rest of her life the most intimate relations with many eminent men in France, and when she died, in 1843, seventy-one years old, leaving to her nephew a very large fortune, her gorgeous funeral was attended by a host of distinguished personages, including even men of such character as Guizot. And yet she also had not disdained to use the most absurd and apparently childish means in order to produce the state of ecstasy in which she alone could divine: playing-cards fancifully arranged, the white of an egg, the sediment of coffee, or the lines in the hand of her visitors. At the same time, however, she used the information which she casually picked up or purposely obtained from her great friends with infinite cunning and matchless tact, so that the better informed often asked her laughingly[Pg 285] if her familiar spirit Ariel was not also known as Talleyrand, David, or Geoffroy? The charlatanism which often and most justly rendered her proceedings suspicious to sober men, was in fact part of her system; she knew perfectly well the old doctrine, *mundus vult decipi*, and did not hesitate to flatter the fondness of all Frenchmen for a theatrical *mise en scène*.

Dryden's famous horoscope of his younger son Charles was probably nothing more than one of those rare but striking coincidences of which the laws of probability give us the exact value. He loved the study of astrology and never omitted to calculate the nativity of his children as soon as

they were born. In the case of Charles he discovered that great dangers would threaten him in his eighth, twenty-third, and thirty-third or forty-third year; and sure enough those years produced serious troubles. On his eighth birthday he was buried under a falling wall; on the twenty-third he fell in Rome from an old tower, and on his thirty-third he was drowned in the Thames.

Divination by means of bones—generally the shoulder bones of rams—is quite common among the Mongols and Tongoose, and the custom seems to have remained unchanged through centuries. For Purchas already quotes from the "Journal" of the Minorite monk Guillaume de Rubruguis, written in 1255, a description of the manner in which the Great Khan of Mongolia tried to ascertain the result of any great enterprise which he might contemplate. Three shoulder[Pg 286] bones of rams were brought to him, which he held for some time in his hands, while deeply meditating on the subject; then he threw them into the fire. After they were burnt black they were again laid before him and examined; if they had cracked lengthways the omen was favorable, if crossways the enterprise was abandoned. Almost identically the same process is described by the great traveler Pallas, who witnessed it repeatedly and obtained very startling communications from the Mongol priests. But here also violent dancing, narcotic perfumes, and wild cries had to aid in producing a trance. The Laplanders have, perhaps, the most striking magic powers which seem to be above suspicion. At least we are assured by every traveler who has spent some time among them, from Caspar Peucer ("Commentaries," etc., Wittebergae, 1580, p. 132) down to the tourists of our days ("Six Months in Lapland," 1870), that they not only see persons at the greatest distance, but furnish minute details as to their occupation or surroundings. After having invoked the aid of his gods the magician falls down like a dead man and remains in a state of trance for twenty-four hours, during which foreigners are always warned to have him carefully guarded, "lest the demons should carry him off." During this time the seer maintains that his "soul opens the gates of the body and moves about freely wherever it chooses to go." When he returns to consciousness he describes accurately and minutely the persons about whom he has promised to give information. In the[Pg 287] East Indies it is well known clairvoyance has existed from time immemorial, and the kind of trance which consists in utter oblivion of actual life and perfect abstraction of thought from this world is there carried out to perfection. The faithful believer sits or lies down in any position he may happen to prefer for the moment, fixes his eyes intently upon the point of his nose, mutters the word One, and finally beholds God with an inner sense, in the form of a white brilliant light of ineffable splendor. Some of these ascetics pass from a simple trance to a state of catalepsy, in which their bodies become insensible to pain—but this kind of *ecstasis* is not accompanied by divination.

Another branch of divination conquers the difficulty which distance in space opposes to our ordinary perceptions. In all such cases it is of course not our hearing or smelling which suddenly becomes miraculously powerful, but another magic power, which causes impressions on the mind like those produced by the eye and the ear. The oldest well-authenticated instance of magic hearing is probably that of Hyrcanus, the high-priest of the Jews, who while burning incense in the temple, heard a voice saying: "Now Antiochus has been slain by thy sons." The news was immediately proclaimed to the people, and some time afterward messengers came announcing that Antiochus had thus perished as he approached Samaria, which he desired to relieve from the besieging army under the sons of Hyrcanus (Josephus, "Antiq." lxiii. ch. 19). A still[Pg 288] more striking instance is also reported by a trustworthy author (Theophylactos Simocata, l. viii. ch. 13). A man in Alexandria, Egypt, saw, as he returned home about midnight, the statues before the great temple moved aside from their seats, and heard them call out to him that the Emperor

had been slain by Phocas (602). Thoroughly frightened he hastened to the authorities, reporting his adventure; he was carried before Peter, the Viceroy of Egypt, and ordered to keep silence. Nine days later, however, the official news came that the Emperor had been murdered. It is evident that the knowledge of the event came to him in some mysterious way, and for an unknown purpose; but that what he saw and heard, was purely the work of his imagination, which became the vehicle of the revelation.

There exists a long, almost unbroken series of similar phenomena through the entire course of modern history, of which but a few can here find space. Richelieu tells us in his *Mémoires* ("Coll. Michaud—Poryoulat," 2d series, vii. p. 23), that the *Prévost des Maréchaux* of the city of Pithiviers was one night engaged in playing cards in his house, when he suddenly hesitated, fell into a deep musing, and then, turning to his companions, said solemnly: "The king has just been murdered!" These words made a deep impression upon all the members of the assembly, which afterward changed into genuine terror, when it became known that on that same evening, at the same hour of four o'clock, P. M., Henry IV. had really been murdered. Nor was this a[Pg 289] solitary case, for on the same day a girl of fourteen, living near the city of Orleans, had asked her father, Simonne, what a king was? Upon his replying that it was the man who commanded all Frenchmen, she had exclaimed: "Great God, I have this moment heard somebody tell me that he was murdered!" It seems that the minds of men were just then everywhere deeply interested in the fate of the king, and hence their readiness to anticipate an event which was no doubt very generally apprehended; even from abroad numerous letters had been received announcing his death beforehand. In the two cases mentioned this excitement had risen to divination. The author of the famous *Zauber Bibliothek*, Horst, mentions (i. p. 285) that his father, a well-known missionary, was once traveling in company with the renowned Hebrew scholar Wiedemann, while a third companion, ordinarily engaged with them in converting Jews, was out at sea. It was a fine, bright day; no rain or wind visible even at a distance. Wiedemann had walked for some time in deep silence, apparently engaged in praying, when suddenly he stopped and said: "Monsieur Horst, take your diary and write down, that our companion is at this moment exposed to great peril by water. The storm will last till night and the danger will be fearful; but the Lord will mercifully preserve him and the vessel, and no lives will be lost. Write it down carefully, so that when our friend returns, we may jointly thank God for His great mercy." The missionary did so, and when the three friends were[Pg 290] united once more their diaries were compared, and it appeared that the statement had been exact in all its details.

Clairvoyance, as far as it implies the seeing of persons or the witnessing of events at a great distance, is counted among the most frequent gifts of early saints, and St. Augustine mentions a number of remarkable cases. Not only absent friends and their fate were thus beheld by privileged Christians, but even the souls of departing saints were seen as they were borne to heaven by angelic hosts. The same exceptional gifts were apparently granted to the early Jesuit fathers; thus Xavier once saw distinctly a whole naval expedition sailing against the pirates of Malacca and defeating them in a great naval battle. He had himself caused the fleet to be sent from Sumatra, and remained during the whole time in a trance. He had fallen down unconscious at the foot of the altar, where he had been fervently praying for a long time, and during his unconsciousness he saw not only a general image of what was occurring at a distance of 200 Portuguese leagues, but every detail, so that upon recovering from the trance he could announce to his brethren the good news of a great victory, of the loss of only three lives, and of the very day and hour on which the official report would be received (Orlandini, l. vii. ch. 84). Queen

Margaret, not always reliable, still seems to state well-known facts only, when she tells us in her famous *Mémoires* (Paris, 1658) the visions of her mother, the great Queen Catherine de[Pg 291] Medici. The latter was lying dangerously ill at Metz, and King Charles, a sister, and another brother of Margaret of Valois, the Duke of Lorraine, and a number of eminent persons of both sexes, were assembled around what was believed to be her death-bed. She was delirious, and suddenly cried out: "Just see how they run! my son is victorious. Great God! raise him up, he has fallen! Do you see the Prince of Condé there? He is dead." Everybody thought she was delirious, but on the next evening a messenger came bringing the news of the battle of Jarnac, and as he mentioned the main events, she calmly turned to her children, saying: "Ah! I knew; I saw it all yesterday!" It seems as if in times of great and general expectation, when bloody battles are fought, and the destiny of empires hangs in the scales, the minds of the masses become so painfully excited that the most sensitive among them fall into a kind of trance, and then perceive, by magic powers of divination, what is taking place at great distances. This over-excitement is, moreover, not unknown to men of the highest character and the greatest erudition. Calvin, whose stern, clear-sighted judgment abhorred all superstition, nevertheless once saw a battle between Catholics and Protestants with all its details. Swedenborg, whose religious enthusiasm never interfered with his scrupulous candor, saw more than once with his mind's eye events occurring at a distance of hundreds of miles. His vision of the great fire at Stockholm is too well authenticated to admit of doubt. Not less reliable are[Pg 292] the accounts of another vision he had at Amsterdam in the presence of a large company. While engaged in animated conversation, he suddenly changed countenance and became silent; the persons near him saw that he was under the influence of some strong impression. After a few moments he seemed to recover, and overwhelmed with questions, he at last reluctantly said: "In this hour the Emperor Peter IV. of Russia has suffered death in his prison!" It was ascertained afterwards that the unfortunate sovereign had died on that day and in the manner indicated.

Among modern seers the most remarkable was probably the well-known poet, Émile Deschamps, who published in 1838 interesting accounts of his own experiences. When he was only eight years old it was decided that he should leave Paris and be sent to Orleans; this troubled him sorely, and in his great grief he found some little comfort in setting his lively fancy to work and to imagine what the new city would be like. When he reached Orleans he was extremely surprised to recognize the streets, the shops, and even the names on the sign-boards, everything was exactly as he had seen it in his day-dreams. While he was yet there he saw his mother, whom he had left in Paris, in a dream rising gently heavenwards with a palm-branch in her hand, and heard her voice, very faint but silvery, call to him, "Émile, Émile, my son!" She had died in the same night, uttering these words with her departing breath. Later in life he often heard strange[Pg 293] but enchanting music while in a state of partial ecstasis; he saw distant events, and, among others, distinctly described a barricade, the defenders of the adjoining house, and certain events connected with the fight at that spot, as they had happened in Paris on the same day (*Le Concile de la libre pensée*, i. p. 183).

A still higher power of divination enables men to read in the faces and forms of others, even of totally unknown persons, not only the leading traits of their character, but even the nature of their former lives. There can be no doubt that every important event in our life leaves a more or less perceptible trace behind, which the acute and experienced observer may learn to read with tolerable distinctness and accuracy. It is well known how the study of the human face enables us thus to discern one secret after another, and how really great men have possessed the power to

judge of the capacity of generals or statesmen to serve them, by natural instinct and without any effort. We say of specially endowed men of this class, that they "can read the souls of men," and what is most interesting is the well-established fact that the purer the mind and the freer from selfishness and conceit, the greater this power to feel, as it were, the character of others. Hence the superiority of women in this respect; hence, especially, the unfailing instinct of children, which enables them instantly to distinguish affected love from real love, and makes them shrink often painfully from contact with evil men.[Pg 294]

When this power reaches in older men a high degree of perfection, it enters within the limits of magic, and in this form was well known to the ancients. The Neo-Platonic Plotinus is reported by Porphyrius to have been almost marvelously endowed with such divining powers; he revealed to his pupils the past and the future events of their lives alike, and once charged the author himself with cherishing thoughts of suicide, when no one else suspected such a purpose. In like manner, we are told, Ancus Nævius, the famous augur of the first Tarquins, could read all he desired to know in the faces of others. The saints of the church were naturally as richly endowed, and from Filipo Neri to Xavier nearly all possessed this peculiar gift of divination. But other men, also, and by no means always those most abundantly endowed with mental superiority, have frequently a peculiar talent of this kind. Thus the well-known writer Zschokke, the author of the admirable work, "Hours of Devotion," gives in his autobiographical work, *Selbstschau*, a full account of his peculiar gifts as a seer, which contains the following principal facts: At the moment when an utter stranger was first introduced to him, he saw a picture of his whole previous life rising gradually before his mind's eye, resembling somewhat a long dream, but clear and closely connected. During this time he would, contrary to his general custom, lose sight of the visitor's face and no longer hear his voice. He used to treat these involuntary revelations at first as mere idle fancies, till[Pg 295] one day he was led by a kind of sportive impulse to tell his family the secret history of a seamstress who had just left the room, and whom he had never seen before. It was soon ascertained that all he had stated was perfectly true, though known only to very few persons. From that time he treated these visions more seriously, taking pains to repeat them in a number of cases to the persons whom they concerned, and to his own great amazement they turned out in every case to be perfectly accurate. The author adds one case of peculiarly striking nature: "One day," he says, "I reached the town of Waldshut, accompanied by two young foresters, who are still alive. It was dusk, and tired by our walk we entered an inn called The Grapevine. We took our supper at the public table in company with numerous guests, who happened to be laughing at the oddities and the simplicity of the Swiss, their faith in Mesmer, in Lavater's 'System of the Physiognomy,' etc. One of my companions, hurt in his national pride, asked me to make a reply, especially with regard to a young man sitting opposite to us, whose pretentious airs and merciless laughter had been peculiarly offensive. It so happened that, a few moments before, the main events in the life of this person had passed before my mind's eye. I turned to him and asked him if he would answer me candidly upon being told the most secret parts of his life by a man who was so complete a stranger to him as I was? That, I added, would certainly go even beyond Lavater's power to read faces. He prom[Pg 296]ised to confess it openly, if I stated facts. Thereupon I related all I had seen in my mind, and informed thus the whole company at table of the young man's history, the events of his life at school, his petty sins, and at last a robbery which he had committed by pilfering his employer's strong-box. I described the empty room with its whitewashed walls and brown door, near which on the right hand, a small black money-box had been standing on a table, and other details. As long as I spoke there reigned a deathlike silence in the room, which was only

interrupted by my asking the young man, from time to time, if all I said was not true. He admitted everything, although evidently in a state of utter consternation, and at last, deeply touched by his candor, I offered him my hand across the table and closed my recital."

This popular writer, a man of unblemished character, who died in 1850, regretted by a whole nation, makes this account of his own prophetic power still more interesting by adding that he met at least once in his life another man similarly endowed. "I once encountered," he says, "while travelling with two of my sons, an old Tyrolese, a peddler of oranges and lemons, in a small inn half concealed in one of the narrow passes of the Jura Mountains. He fixed his eyes for some time upon my face, and then entered into conversation with me, stating that he knew me, although I did not know him, and then began, to the intense delight of the peasants who sat around us and of my children, to chat about myself and my past life. How the old man had acquired his[Pg 297] strange knowledge he could not explain to himself or to others, but he evidently valued it highly, while my sons were not a little astonished to discover that other men possessed the same gift which they had only known to exist in their father."

It must not be forgotten that the human eye has, beyond question, often a power which far transcends the ordinary purposes of sight, and approaches the boundaries of magic. There is probably no one who cannot recall scenes in which the soothing and cheering expression of gentle eyes has acted like healing balm on wounded hearts; or others, in which glances of fury and hatred have caused genuine terror and frightened the conscience. History records a number of instances, from the glance of the Saviour, which made Peter go out and weep bitterly, to the piercing eye of a well-known English judge, which made criminals of every rank in society feel as if their very hearts lay open to the divining eye of a master. This peculiar and almost irresistible power of the eye has not inaptly been traced back to the gorgon head of antiquity—a frightful image from Hades with a dread glance of the eye, as it is called by Homer (Il. viii. 349; Odyss. xi. 633). The same fearful expression, chilling the blood and almost arresting the beating of the heart, is frequently mentioned in modern accounts of visions. Thus the Demon of Tedworth recorded by Glanvil ("Sadd. Triumph." 4th ed. p. 270), consisted of the vague outlines of a human face, in which only two bright, piercing eyes could be distinguished. In other cases, a[Pg 298] faint vapor, barely recalling a human shape, arises before the beholder, and above it are seen the same terrible eyes

"Sent from the palace of Ais by fearful Persephoneia."

Magic divination in point of time includes the class of generally very vague and indefinite perceptions, which we call presentiments. These are, unfortunately, so universally mixed up with impressions produced after the occurrence—*vaticinium post eventum*—that their value as interesting phenomena of magic is seriously impaired. There remains, however, in a number of cases, enough that is free from all spurious admixture, to admit of being examined seriously. The ancients not only believed in this kind of foresight, but ascribed it with Pythagoras to revelations made by friendly spirits; in Holy Writ it rises almost invariably, under direct inspiration from on high, to genuine prophecy. It reveals not only the fate of the seer, but also that of others, and even of whole nations; the details vary, of course, according to the prevailing spirit of the times.

When Narses was ruling over Italy, a young shepherd in the service of Valerianus, a lawyer, was seized by the plague and fell into syncope. He recovered for a time, and then declared that he had been carried to heaven, where he had heard the names of all who in his master's house

should die of the plague, adding that Valerianus himself would escape. After his death everything occurred as he had predicted. An English[Pg 299] minister, Mr. Dodd, one night felt an irresistible impulse to visit a friend of his who lived at some distance. He walked to his house, found the family asleep, but the father still awake and ready to open the door to his late visitor. The latter, very much embarrassed, thought it best to state the matter candidly, and confessed that he came for no ostensible purpose, and really did not know himself what made him do so. "But God knew it," was the answer, "for here is the rope with which I was just about to hang myself." It may well be presumed that the Rev. Mr. Dodd had some apprehensions of the state of mind of his friend; but that he should have felt prompted to call upon him just at that hour, was certainly not a mere accident.

The family of the great Goethe was singularly endowed with this power of presentiment. The poet's grandfather predicted both a great conflagration and the unexpected arrival of the German Emperor, and a dream informed him beforehand of his election as alderman and then as mayor of his native city. His mother's sister saw hidden things in her dreams. His grandmother once entered her daughter's chamber long after midnight in a state of great and painful excitement; she had heard in her own room a noise like the rustling of papers, and then deep sighs, and after a while a cold breath had struck her. Some time after this event a stranger was announced, and when he appeared before her holding a crumbled paper in his hand, she had barely strength enough to keep from[Pg 300] fainting. When she recovered, her visitor stated that in the night of her vision a dear friend of hers, lying on his deathbed, had asked for paper in order to impart to her an important secret; before he could write, however, he had been seized by the death-struggle, and after crumpling up the paper and uttering two deep sighs he had expired. An indistinct scrawl was all that could be seen; still the stranger had thought it best to bring the paper. The secret concerned his now orphaned child, a girl whom Goethe's grandparents thereupon took home and cared for affectionately (*Goethe's Briefwechsel,* 3d ed., II. p. 268).

Bourrienne tells us in his *Mémoires* several instances of remarkable forebodings on the part of Napoleon's first wife, Josephine. Her mind was probably, by her education and the peculiar surroundings in which she passed her childhood, predisposed to receive vivid impressions of this kind, and to observe them with great care and deep interest. Thus she almost invariably predicted the failure of such of her husband's enterprises as proved unsuccessful. After Bonaparte had moved into the Tuileries on the 18th Brumaire, she saw, while sitting in the room of poor Marie Antoinette, the shadow of the unfortunate queen rise from the floor, pass gently through the apartment, and vanish through the window. She fainted, and from that day predicted her own sad fate. On another occasion the spirit of her first husband, Beauharnais, appeared before her with a gesture of solemn warning; she immediately[Pg 301] turned to Napoleon, exclaiming: "Awake, awake, you are threatened by a great danger!" There seemed to be, for some days, no ground for apprehension, but so strong were her fears that she secretly sent for the minister of police and entreated him to take special measures for the safety of the First Consul. At eight o'clock of the evening of the same day the latter left the Tuileries on his way to the opera; a terrible explosion was heard in the Rue St. Nicaise, where conspirators attempted to blow up the dictator, and he narrowly escaped with his life. Josephine at once hastened to his side, and after having most tenderly cared for the wounded, embraced Napoleon in public with tears streaming down her face, and implored him hereafter to listen more attentively to her warnings. Napoleon, however, though superstitious enough firmly to believe in what he called his "star," and even to see it

shining in the heavens when no one else beheld it, never would admit the value of his wife's forebodings.

Presentiments of this kind are most frequently felt before death, and it is now almost universally believed that the impending dissolution of the body relieves the spirit in many cases fully enough from its bondage to endow it with a clear and distinct anticipation of the coming event. A large number of historical personages have thus been enabled to predict the day, and many even the hour of their own death. The Connétable de Bourbon, who was besieging Rome, addressed, according to Brantôme (*Vies des gr. capitaines*, ch. 28), on the[Pg 302] day of the final assault, his troops, and told them he would certainly fall before the Eternal City, but without regret if they but proved victorious. Henry IV. of France, felt his death coming, according to the unanimous evidence of Sully, L'Etoile, and Bassompierre, and said, before he entered his coach on the fatal day: "My friend, I would rather not go out to-day; I know I shall meet with misfortune." On the 16th of May, 1813, four days before the battle of Bautzen, two of Napoleon's great officers, the Duke of Vicenza and Marshal Duroc, were in attendance at Dresden while the emperor was holding a protracted conference with the Austrian ambassador. The clock was striking midnight, when suddenly Duroc seized his companion by the arm and with frightfully altered features, looking intently at him, said in trembling tones: "My friend, this lasts too long; we shall all of us perish, and he last of all. A secret voice tells me that I shall never see France again." It is well known that on the day of the battle a cannon-ball which had already killed General Kirchner, wounded Duroc also mortally, and when he lay on his deathbed he once more turned to the Duke of Vicenza and reminded him of the words he had spoken in Dresden.

The trustworthy author of "Eight Months in Japan," N. Lühdorf, tells us (p. 158) a remarkable instance of unconscious foreboding on the part of a common sailor. The American barque *Greta* was in 1855 chartered to carry a great number of Russians, who had been ship[Pg 303]wrecked on board the frigate *Diana* during an earthquake at Simoda to the Russian port of Ayan. A sailor on board was very ill, and shortly before his death told his comrades that he would soon die, but that he was rather glad of it, as they would all be captured by the English, with whom Russia was then at war. The report of his prediction reached the captain's cabin, but all the officers agreed that such an event was next to impossible; a dense fog was making the ship perfectly invisible, and no English fleet had as yet appeared in the Sea of Okhotsk, where the Russians had neither vessels nor forts to tempt the British. The whole force of England in those waters was at that moment engaged in blockading the Russian fleet in the Bay of Castris in the Gulf of Tartary. Nevertheless it so chanced that a British steamer, the corvette *Barracouta*, hove in sight on the 1st of August and captured the vessel, making the Russians prisoners of war.

SECOND SIGHT.

A special kind of divination, which has at times been evidenced in certain parts of Europe, and is not unknown to our North-western Indians, consists in the perception of contemporaneous or future events, during a brief trance. Generally the seer looks with painfully raised eyelids, fixedly into space, evidently utterly unconscious of all around him, and engaged in watching a distant occurrence. A peculiar feature of this phenomenon,[Pg 304] familiar to all readers as second sight, is the exclusion of religious or supernatural matters; the visions are always strictly limited to events of daily life: deaths and births, battles and skirmishes, baptisms and weddings.

The actors in these scenes are often personally unknown to the seer, and the transactions are as frequently beheld in symbols as in reality. A man who is to die a violent death, may be seen with a rope around his neck or headless, with a dagger plunged into his breast, or sinking into the water up to his neck; the sick man who is to expire in his bed, will appear wrapped up in his winding sheet, in which case his person is more or less completely concealed as his death is nearer or farther off. A friend or a messenger coming from a great distance, is seen as a faint shadow, and a murderer or a thief, as a wolf or a fox. Another peculiar feature of second sight is the fact that the same visions are very frequently beheld by several persons, although the latter may live far apart and have nothing in common with each other. The phenomena are sporadic in Germany and Switzerland, in the Dauphiné and the Cevennes; they occur in larger numbers and are often hereditary in certain families, in Denmark, the Scotch Highlands and the Faroe Islands. In Gaelic, the persons thus gifted are called Taishatrim, seers of shadows, or Phissichin, possessing knowledge beforehand. Hence, they have been most thoroughly studied in those countries, and Mr. Martin has gathered all that could be learnt of second sight in the Shetlands, in a[Pg 305] work of great interest. Here the phenomena are not unfrequently accompanied by magic hearing also, as when funerals are seen in visions, and at the same time the chants of the bystanders and even the words of the preacher are distinctly heard. The most marked form of this feature is the taisk or wraith, a cry uttered by a person who is soon to die, and heard by the seer. The dwellers on those remote islands are also in the habit of smelling an odor of fish, often weeks and months before the latter appear in their waters. A special kind of divination exists in Wales and on the Isle of Man, where the approaching death of friends is revealed by so-called body lights, caulawillan cyrth.

The entirely unselfish character of second sight must not be overlooked, as far as it increases in a high degree the value of such phenomena and adds to their authenticity. In the great majority of cases the persons and events seen under such circumstances are of no interest to the seer; they are frequently utterly strange and unknown to him, and hence find no sympathy in his heart. It appears as if, by some unknown and hence magic process, a window was opened for the soul to look out and behold whatever may happen to be presented to the inner vision; this image is then transferred to the outer eye, and the seer's imagination makes him believe that he sees in reality what is revealed to him by this mysterious process. Hence also the facts that the persons gifted with second sight, so far from laboring under diseases of any kind,[Pg 306] are almost without exception simple, frugal men, free from chronic affections, and perfect strangers to hysterics, spasms, or nervous sufferings. Insanity and suicide are as unknown to them as drunkenness, and no case of selfish interest or willful imposture has ever been recorded in connection with second sight. This does not imply, however, that efforts have not been made by others to profit by the strange gifts of such persons; but even the career of the famous Duncan Campbell, a deaf and dumb Scot, who, in the beginning of the last century, created an immense sensation in London, only proved anew the well-known disinterestedness of these seers. In many instances the gift of second sight is treated with indifference, and hardly noticed. Such was the case with Lord Nelson, who is reported to have exhibited the gift of a kind of second sight, at least in two well-authenticated cases, related by Sir Thomas Hardy to Admiral Dundas, and quoted by Dr. Mayo, as he had the account from the latter. Captain Hardy heard Nelson order the commander of a frigate to shake out all sails to sail towards a certain place where he would in all probability meet the French fleet, and as soon as he had made it out, to run into a certain port and there to wait for Nelson's arrival. When the officer had left the cabin, Nelson turned to Hardy, saying: "He will go to the West Indies; he will see the French; he will make the port I told him to make, but he

will not wait for me—he will sail for England." The commander actually did so. In this[Pg 307] case, however, Nelson may possibly have only given a striking evidence of his power to read the character of men, and to draw his conclusions as to their probable action. In the following instance his knowledge appeared, on the contrary, as a magic phenomenon. It was shortly before the battle of Trafalgar, when an English frigate was made out at such a distance that her position could not be accurately ascertained. Suddenly Nelson turned to Hardy, who was standing by his side, and said: "The frigate has sighted the French." Hardy had nothing to say in reply. "She sights the French; she will fire presently." In an instant the low sound of a signal-shot was heard afar off!

In other cases the curious gift is borne with great impatience, and becomes a source of intense suffering. This is certainly very pardonable in men who read impending death in the features of others, and hence are continually subject to heart-rending impressions. Sometimes the moribund appears as if he had been lying in his grave already for several days, at other times he is seen wrapped up in his shroud or in the act of expiring. In some parts of Germany the approaching death of a neighbor is announced by the appearance of Death itself, not in the familiar mythological form, but as a white, luminous appearance, which either stops before the house of the person who is to die soon, or actually enters it and places itself by the side of the latter. Occasionally the image is seen to fill the seat or to walk in a procession in the place of a man as yet in perfect[Pg 308] health, who nevertheless soon falls a victim to some disease or sudden attack.

Second sight is, like all similar magic phenomena, frequently mentioned in the writings of the ancients. Homer mentions a case in his "Odyssey" (xx. v. 351). Apollonius of Tyana was delivering an oration at Ephesus, when he suddenly stopped in the middle of a sentence and beheld in a vision the Emperor Domitian at Rome, in the act of succumbing to his murderers. He fell into a kind of trance, his eyes became fixed, and he exclaimed in an unnatural voice: "Down with the tyrant!" (*Vita Apoll. Zenobis Anolo interprete.* Paris, 1555, l. viii. p. 562.) Henry IV., when still Prince of Navarre, saw on the eve of St. Bartholomew several drops of blood falling upon the green cloth of the card-table at which he was seated in company with several courtiers; the latter beheld the fearful and ominous sight as well as he himself. German writings abound with instances of men having seen their own funeral several days before their death, and in many instances the warning is reported to have had a most salutary effect in causing them to repent of their sins and to prepare for the impending summons. One of the most remarkable instances is that of a distinguished professor of divinity, Dr. Lysius, in Königsberg. He had inherited special magic powers through many generations from an early ancestor, who saw a funeral of very peculiar nature, with all the attending circumstances, long before it actually took place. He himself had his[Pg 309] first revelation when, lying in bed awake, he saw suddenly his chamber quite light, and something like a man's shadow pass him, while on his mind, not on his ear, fell the words: *Umbra matris tuæ*. Although his mother had just written to him that she was in unusually good health and spirits, she had died that very night. On another occasion he astonished his friends by telling them what a superb new building he had seen erected in Königsberg, giving all the details of church and school-room to a little gate in a narrow alley. Many years afterwards such a building was really erected there, and he himself called to occupy part of it, when that little gate became his favorite entrance. Although he had many such visions, and his wife, succumbing to the contagious influence of magic powers, also foresaw more than one important event, he sternly refused to attach any weight to his own forebodings or those of

other persons. Thus a poor woman, possessing the gift of second sight, once came to some members of his family and told them she had seen seven funerals leave his house; when this was reported to him, he denounced the superstition as unchristian, and forbade its being mentioned again in his presence. But, although there was not a sick person in the house at the time, and even the older members of the family were unusually hale and hearty, in a few weeks every one in the house was dangerously ill, the head of the family alone excepted, and as three only escaped, the seven deaths which had been foreseen actually took place.[Pg 310]

The annals of Swedish history (Arndt, *Schwed. Gesch.* p. 317) record a remarkable case of this kind. The scene was the old castle of Gripsholm, near Stockholm, a place full of terrible reminiscences, and more than once made famous by strange mysteries. A great state dinner given to a prince of Baden, had just ended, when one of the guests, Count Frölich, suddenly gazed fixedly at the great door of the dining-hall, and when he regained his composure, declared he had just seen their princely guest walk in, wearing a different uniform from that in which he was actually dressed, as he sat in the place of honor. It was, however, a custom of the prince's to wear one costume one day and another the next day, and thus to change regularly; Count Frölich had seen him in that which he would accordingly wear the next day. The impression was beginning to wear away, and the accident was nearly forgotten, when suddenly a great disturbance was heard without, servants came running in, women were heard crying, and even the officers on guard were seriously disturbed. The report was that "King Eric's ghost" had been seen. On the following day the Prince of Baden was thrown from his carriage and instantly killed; his body was brought back to Gripsholm.

Here also we meet again with the exceptional powers granted to Goethe. He had just parted with one of his many loves, the fair daughter of the minister of Drusenheim, Friederike, and was riding in deep thought upon the footpath, when he suddenly saw, "not with the[Pg 311] eyes of the body, but of the spirit," his own self in a new light gray coat, laced with gold, riding towards him. When he made an effort to shake off the impression, the vision disappeared. "It is strange, however," he tells us himself, "that I found myself eight years later riding on that same road, in order to see Friederike once more, and was then dressed, by accident and not from choice, in the costume of which I had dreamt" (*Aus Meinem Leben*, iii. p. 84). A kindred spirit, Sir Humphry Davy, had once a vision, which strangely enough was fulfilled more than once. In his attractive work ("Consolations in Travel," p. 63), he relates how he saw, when suffering of jail fever, the image of a beautiful woman, with whom he soon entered into a most interesting conversation. He was at the time warmly attached to a lady, but the vision represented a girl with brown hair, blue eyes and blooming complexion, while his lady-love was pale and had dark eyes and dark hair. His mysterious visitor came frequently, as long as he was really sick, but as his strength returned, her visits became rarer, and at last ceased altogether. He forgot it entirely; but ten years later he suddenly met in Illyria, a girl of about fourteen or fifteen years, who strikingly resembled the image he had seen, and now recalled in all its details. Another ten years passed, and the great chemist met once more in traveling, a person who as strikingly resembled his first vision, and became indebted to her tender care and kindness for the preservation of his life.[Pg 312]

In some parts of the world this gift of second sight assumes very peculiar forms. In Africa, for instance, and especially in the countries adjoining the Sahara, men and women are found who possess alike the power of seeing coming events beforehand. More than once European travelers have been hospitably received by natives who had been warned of their coming. Richardson tells

us in his graphic account of his "Mission to Central Africa," that his arrival had thus been announced to the chief and the people of Tintalus in these words: "A caravan of Englishmen is on the way from Tripoli, to come to you." The seer was an old negro-woman, a reputed witch, who had a great reputation for anticipating events. In the Isle of France—we learn from James Prior in his "Voyage in the Indian Seas"—there are many men who can see vessels at a distance of several hundred miles. One of them described accurately and minutely the wreck of a ship on the coast of Madagascar, from whence it was to bring provisions. A woman expecting her lover on board another ship, inquired of one of these seers if he could give her any comfort: he replied promptly that the vessel was only three days' sail from the island, and that her friend was then engaged in washing his linen. The ship arrived at the appointed time, and the man corroborated the seer's statement. The great navigator relates even more surprising feats accomplished by the director of signals, Faillafé, who saw vessels distinctly at a distance of from sixty to one hundred sea miles. Their image[Pg 313] appeared to him on the horizon in the shape of a light brown cloud with faint outlines, but yet distinctly enough to enable him to distinguish the size of the vessel, the nature of its rigging, and the direction in which it was sailing.

Second hearing seems to be limited to the eastern part of Scotland, where it occurs occasionally in whole families. Mrs. Crowe mentions, for instance, a man and his wife in Berwickshire, who were both aroused at night by a loud cry which they at once recognized as peculiar to their son. It appeared afterwards that he had perished at sea in that night and at the same hour when the cry was heard (I. p. 161). In another case a man in Perthshire was waked by his wife, who told him that no doubt their son had been drowned, for she had distinctly heard the splash as he fell into the water, and had been aroused by the noise. Here also the foreboding proved true: the man had fallen from the yardarm, and disappeared before a boat could be lowered, although his fall had been heard by all aboard.

It must finally be mentioned that second sight has been noticed not in men only, but even in animals. Horses especially seem to be extremely sensitive to all magic influences, and accounts of their peculiar conduct under trying circumstances are both numerous and perfectly well authenticated. Thus a minister in Lindholm, the Rev. Mr. Hansen, owned a perfectly gentle and good-natured horse, which all of a sudden refused to stand still in his stable, began to tremble and give[Pg 314] all signs of great fear, and finally kicked and reared so wildly that he had to be removed. As soon as he was placed in another stable he calmed down and became perfectly quiet. It was at last discovered that a person endowed with second sight had ascribed the strange behavior of the horse to the fact that a coffin was being made before his open stable, and that the horse could not bear the sight. The man was laughed at, but not long after the minister's wife died, and for some special reasons the coffin was actually made in full view of the former stable of the horse (Kies. *Arch.* viii. p. 111). Dogs also have been reported in almost innumerable cases to have set up a most painful howling before the approaching death of inmates of a house where they were kept.

In England and in Germany especially, they are considered capable of seeing supernatural beings. When they are seen to cower down of a sudden, and to press close to the feet of their masters, trembling often in all their limbs, and looking up most piteously, as if for help, popular belief says: "All is not right with the dog," or "He sees more than men can see." The memory of Balaam's ass rises instinctively in our mind, and we feel that this part of creation, which groaneth with us for salvation, and which was included among those for whose sake the Lord spared Nineveh, may see what is concealed from our eyes. Samuel Wesley tells us expressly

how a dog, specially bought for the purpose of frightening away the evil-disposed men who were at[Pg 315] first suspected of causing the nightly disturbances at the parsonage, barked but once the first night, and after that exhibited, upon the recurrence of those noises, quite as much terror as the children.

Nor are dogs and horses the only animals considered capable of perceiving by a special instinct of their own the working of supernatural agencies. During a series of mysterious disturbances in a German village, the chickens fled in terror from the garden, and the cattle refused to enter the enclosure, when the appearances were seen. Swiss herdsmen have a number of stories concerning "feyed" places in the Alps, to which neither caress nor compulsion can induce their herds to go, even when pasture is rare everywhere else, and rich grass seems to tempt them to come to the abhorred meadows. Storks have been known to have abandoned the rooftree on which for years they had built their nest, and in every case the forsaken house was burnt during the summer. This and other peculiarities of sagacious animals have been especially noticed in Denmark, where all animals are called *synsk*, seers, when they are believed to possess the gift of second sight.

ORACLES AND PROPHECIES.

The highest degree of divination is the actual foretelling of events which are yet to happen. The immediate causes which awaken the gift are of the most varied character, and often very curious. Thus a young Florentine, Gasparo, who had been wounded by an[Pg 316] arrow, and could not be relieved, began in his fearful suffering to pray incessantly, day and night; this excited him to such a degree that he finally foretold not only the name of his visitors, but also the hour at which they would come, and finally the day of his complete recovery; he also knew, by the same instinct, that later in life he would go to Rome and die there. When the iron point was at last removed from his wound, his health began to improve, and at once his prophetic gift left him and never returned. He went, however, to Rome, and really died in the Eternal City (Colquhoun, p. 333). The priests of Apollo, at Colophon, intoxicated themselves with the water of his fountain, which was as famous for bestowing the gift of prophecy as Æsculapius' well at Pergamus and the springs near his temple at Pellena. In other temples vapors were inhaled by the prophetic priests. In the prophet-schools of the Israelites music seems to have played a prominent part, for Samuel told Saul he would meet at the hill of Gad "a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery and a tabret and a pipe before them." The Jews possessed, however, also other means to aid in divining: Joseph had his cup, a custom still prevalent in the East; and the High Priest, before entering into the Holiest, put on the Thummim with its six dark jewels and the Urim with its six light-colored jewels, whereupon the brilliant sparkling of the precious stones and the rich fumes of incense combined with the awful sense of the[Pg 317] presence of Jehovah in predisposing his mind to receive revelations from on high. The false prophets of Baal, on the contrary, tried to produce like effects by bloody means: "They cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them," and then they prophesied. It has already been mentioned that in India the glance was fixed upon the navel, until the divine light began to shine before the mind's eye—in other words, until a trance is induced, and visions begin to appear. The changes which immediately precede dissolution seem, finally, to be most favorable to a development of prophetic powers. Already Aretæus, the Cappadocian, said that the mind of many dying persons was perfectly clear, penetrating and

prophetic, and mentions a number of cases in which the dying had begun to converse with the dead, or foretold the fate of those who stood by their bedside. Thus Homer also makes dying Hector warn Achilles of his approaching end, and Calanus, when in the act of ascending the funeral pile, replies to Alexander's question if he had any request to make: "No, I have nothing to ask, for I shall see you the day after to-morrow!" And on that day the young conqueror died.

Suetonius reports that the Emperor Augustus was passing away almost imperceptibly, when he suddenly shuddered and said that forty youths were carrying him off. It so happened that when the end came, forty men of his body-guard were ordered to raise and convey the body to another room in the palace. There[Pg 318] are a few cases known in which apparently dying persons, after delivering such prophecies, have recovered and retained the exceptional gift during the remainder of their lives, but these instances are rare and require confirmation.

As all magic phenomena are liable to be mixed up with delusion and imposture, so divination of this kind also has been frequently imitated for personal or political purposes. The ancient oracles already gave frequently answers full of irony and sly humor. The story of King Alexander of Epirus is well known, who was warned by the oracle at Dodona to keep away from the Acherusian waters, and then perished in the river Acheros, in Italy. Thus Henry IV. of England had been told that he would die at Jerusalem; he thought only of Palestine, but met his death unconsciously in a room belonging to the Abbey of Westminster, which bore the name of the holy city. In Spain, Ferdinand the Catholic received warning that he would die at Madrigal, and hence carefully avoided the city of that name; but when his last illness overtook him at an obscure little town, he found that it was called Madrigaola, or Little Madrigal. The historian Mariana (*Hist. de rebus Hisp.*, l. xxii. chap. 66) also mentions the despair of the famous favorite Don Alvarez de Luna, whom an astrologer had warned against Cadahalso, a village near Toledo; the unfortunate man died on the scaffold which is also called cadahalso. In France it was the fate of the superstitious queen, Catherine de[Pg 319] Medici, to experience a similar mortification: the famous Nostradamus had predicted that she would die in St. Germain, and she carefully avoided that palace; but when her last end came, she found herself sinking helpless into the arms of a courtier called St. Germain.

Nor is there any want of false prophecies from the time when Jeremiah complained that "a wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the people prophesy falsely" (Jer. v. 30), to the great money crisis in 1857, which filled the land with predictions of the approaching end. Periods of great political or religious excitement invariably produce a few genuine and a host of spurious prophets, which represent the sad forebodings filling the mind of a distressed nation and avail themselves of the credulity of all great sufferers. Some of the most absurd prophecies have nevertheless caused a perfect panic, extending in some cases throughout whole countries. Thus in 1578 a famous astrologer, the father of all weather prophecies in our almanacs, predicted that in the month of February, 1524, when three planets should enter at once the constellation of the fishes, a second deluge would destroy the earth. The report reached the Emperor Charles V., who submitted the matter to his Spanish theologians and astrologers. They investigated it with solemn gravity and found it very formidable; from Spain the panic spread through the whole of Europe. When February came thousands left their houses and sought refuge on[Pg 320] mountain and hill-top; others hoped to escape on board ships, and a rich president at Toulouse actually built himself a second ark. When the deluge did not take place, divines and diviners were by no means abashed; they declared that God had this time also taken pity upon sinful men in consideration of the fervent prayer of the faithful, as he had done before in the case of Nineveh.

The fear of the last judgment has at all times so filled the minds of men as to make them readily believe a prediction of the approaching end of the world, an event which, it is well known, the apostles, Martin Luther, and certain modern divines, have persistently thought immediately impending. Sects have arisen at various epochs who have looked forward to the second Advent with a sincerity of conviction of which they gave striking and even most fearful evidence. The Millerites of the Union have more than once predicted the coming of Christ, and in anticipation of the near Advent, disposed of their property, assumed the white robes in which they were to ascend to heaven, and even mounted into the topmost branches of trees to shorten the journey. In Switzerland a young woman of Berne became so excited by the coming of judgment, which she fixed upon the next Easter day, that she prophesied daily, gathered a number of followers around her, and actually had her own grandfather strangled in order to save his soul before the approaching Advent. (Stilling, "Jenseits," p. 117.)

Not unfrequently prophecies are apparently delivered[Pg 321] by intermediate agents, angels, demons or peculiarly marked persons. It was no doubt an effect of the deep and continued excitement felt by Caius Cassius, that his mind was filled with the image of murdered Cæsar, and hence he could very easily fancy he saw his victim in his purple cloak, horse and rider of gigantic proportions, suddenly appear in the din of the battle at Philippi, riding down upon him with wild passion. It is well known that the impression was strong enough to make him, who had never yet turned his back upon the enemy, seek safety in flight, and cry out: "What more do you want if murder does not finish you?" (Valer. Max. I. 8.)

It must lastly be borne in mind, that prophecies have not remained as sterile as other magical phenomena. Already Herder mentions the advantages of ancient oracles. He says (*Ideen zur Phil. d. Geschichte*, iii. p. 211): "Many a tyrant and criminal was publicly marked by the divine voice (of oracles), when it foretold their fate; in like manner it has saved many an innocent person, given good advice to the helpless, lent divine authority to noble institutions, made known works of art, and sanctioned great moral truths as well as wholesome maxims of state policy." It need hardly be added that the prophets of Israel were the main upholders of the religious life as well as of the morality of the chosen people; while the priests remained stationary in their views, and contented themselves with performing the ceremonial service of the temple, the prophets preserved[Pg 322] the true faith, and furthered its gradually widening revelation. In their case, however, divination was so clearly the result of divine inspiration, that their prophecies can hardly be classed among magic phenomena. The ground which they have in common with merely human forebodings and divinings, is the state of trance in which alone prophets seem to have foretold the future, whether we believe this ecstatic condition to have been caused by music, long-protracted prayer or the direct agency of the Holy Spirit.

This ecstasy was in the case of almost all the oracles of antiquity brought on by inhaling certain gases which rose from the soil and produced often most fearful symptoms in the unfortunate persons employed for the purpose. At the same time they were rarely free from an addition of artifice, as the priests not only filled the mind of the pythoness beforehand with thoughts suggested by their own wisdom and political experience, but the latter also frequently employed her skill as a ventriloquist, in order to increase the force of her revelations. Hence the fact, that almost all the Greek oracles proceeded from deep caves, in which, as at Dodona and Delphi, carbonic gas was developed in abundance; hence, also, the name of *ventriloqua vates*, which was commonly given to the Delphi Pythia. The oldest of these oracles, that at Dodona, foretold events for nearly two thousand years, and even survived the almost universal destruction of such

institutions at the time of Christ; it did not actually cease till the third century,[Pg 323] when an Illyrian robber cut down the sacred tree. The oracle of Zeus Trophonius in Bœotia spoke through the patients who were brought to the caves, where they became somnambulists, had visions and answered the questions of the priests while they were in this condition. The Romans also had their somnambulist prophets from the earliest days, and whenever the state was in danger, the Sibylline books were consulted. Christianity made an end to all such divination in Italy as in Greece. It is strange that the vast scheme of Egyptian superstition shows us no oracles whatever; but among the Germans prophets were all the more numerous. They foretold war or peace, success or failure, and exercised a powerful influence on all affairs. One of the older prophetesses, Veleda, who lived in an isolated tower, and allowed herself to be but rarely consulted, was held in high esteem even by the Romans. The Celts had in like manner prophet-Druids, some of whom became well known to the Romans, and are reported to have foretold the fate of the emperors Aurelian, Diocletian and Severus.

We have the authority of Josephus for the continuance of prophetic power in Israel even after the coming of Christ. He tells us of Jesus, the son of Ananus, who ran for seven years and five months through the streets of Jerusalem, proclaiming the coming ruin, and, while crying out "Woe is me!" was struck and instantly killed by a stone from one of the siege engines of the Romans. (Jos., l. vi. c. 31.) Josephus himself[Pg 324] passes for a prophet, having predicted the fall of the city of Jotapata forty-seven days in advance, his own captivity, and the imperial dignity of Vespasian as well as of Titus. Of northern prophets, Merlin is probably the most widely known; he was a Celtic bard, called Myrdhin, and his poems, written in the seventh century, were looked upon as accurate descriptions of many subsequent events, such as the exploits of Joan of Arc. In the sixteenth century Nostradamus took his place, whose prophetic verses, *Vraies Centuries et Prophéties*, are to this day current among the people, and now and then reappear in leading journals. He had been a professor of medicine in the University of Montpellier, and died in 1566, enjoying a world-wide reputation as an astrologer. His brief and often enigmatical verses have never lost their hold on credulous minds, and a few striking instances have, even in our century, largely revived his credit. Such was, for instance, the stanza (No. 10):

Un empereur naître près d'Italie,Qui à l'empire sera vendu très cher;Dirònt avec quels gens il se rallië,Qu'on trouvera moins prince que boucher,

which was naturally applied to the great Napoleon and his marshals.

Another northern prophet, whose predictions are still quoted, was the Archbishop of Armagh, Malachias, who, in 1130, foretold the fate of all coming popes; as in almost all similar cases, here also the accidental[Pg 325] coincidences have been carefully noted and pompously proclaimed, while the many unfulfilled prophecies have been as studiously concealed. It is curious, however, that he distinctly predicted the fate of Pius VI., whom he spoke of as "*Vir apostolicus moriens in exilo*" (he died, 1799, an exile, in Valence), and that he characterized Pius IX. as "Crux de Cruce." St. Bridget of Sweden had the satisfaction of seeing her prophecies approved of by the Council of Basle; they were translated subsequently into almost every living language, and are still held in high esteem by thousands in every part of Europe. The most prominent name among English prophets is probably that of Archbishop Usher, who predicted Cromwell's fate, and many events in England and Ireland, the result, no doubt, of great sagacity

and a remarkable power of combination, but exceeding in many instances the ordinary measure of human wisdom. An entirely different prophet was Rice Evans (Jortin, "Rem. on Eccles. Hist.," p. 377), who, fixing his eye upon the hollow of his hand, saw there images of Lord Fairfax, Cromwell, and four other crowned heads appearing one after another; thus, it is said, he predicted the Protectorate and the reign of the four sovereigns of the house of Stuart. Jane Leade, a most extraordinary and mysterious person, founded in 1697, when she had reached the age of seventy-four, her so-called Philadelphian Society, a prominent member of which was the famous Pordage, formerly a minister and then a physician. This very vain woman main[Pg 326]tained that she was inspired in the same manner as St. John in Patmos, and that she was compelled by the power of the Holy Spirit to foretell the future. In spite of her erroneous announcement of the near Millennium, she foretold many minor events with great accuracy, and was highly esteemed as a prophet. Dr. Pordage had mainly visions of the future world, which were all characterized by a great purity of heart and wildness of imagination. Swedenborg also had many prophetic visions, but their fulfillment belongs exclusively to future life, and their genuineness, firmly believed by the numerous and enlightened members of the New Church, cannot be proved to others in this world.

One of the most remarkable cases of modern prophesying which has been officially recorded, is connected with the death of Pope Ganganelli. The latter heard that a number of persons in various parts of Italy had predicted that he would soon end his life by a violent death. He attached sufficient importance to these reports to hand the matter over to a special commission previously appointed to examine grave charges which had been brought against the Jesuits, perhaps suspecting that the Order of Jesus was not unconnected with those predictions. Among the persons who were thereupon arrested was a simple, ignorant peasant-girl, Beatrice Rensi, who told the gendarme very calmly: "Ganganelli has me arrested, Braschi will set me free," implying that the latter would be the next pope. The[Pg 327] priest at Valentano, who was arrested on the same day (12th of May, 1774), exclaimed quite joyously: "What happens to me now has been predicted three times already; take these papers and see what my daughter (the Rensi) has foretold." Upon examination it appears that the girl had fixed the pope's day upon the day of equinoxes, in the month of September; she announced that he would proclaim a year of absolution, but not live to see it; that none of the faithful would kiss his foot, nor would they take him, as usual, to the Church of St. Peter. At the same time she spoke of a fierce inward struggle through which the Holy Father would have to pass before his death. Soon after these predictions were made officially known to the pope, the bull against the order of Jesuits was laid before him; the immense importance of such a decree, and the evident dangers with which it was fraught, caused him great concern, and when he one night rose from his bed to affix his signature, and, frightened by some considerations, threw away the pen only to take it up at last and sign the paper, he suddenly recalled the prophecy of the peasant-girl. He drove at once to a great prelate in Rome, who had formerly been the girl's confessor, and inquired of him about her character; the priest testified to her purity, her unimpeached honesty, and her simplicity, adding that in his opinion she was evidently favored by heaven with special and very extraordinary powers. Ganganelli was made furious by this suggestion, and insisted upon it that his commis[Pg 328]sion should declare all these predictions wicked lies, the inspirations of the Devil, and condemn the sixty-two persons who had been arrested to pay the extreme penalty in the Castle of St. Angelo on the 1st of October. In the meantime, however, his health began to suffer, and his mind was more and more deeply affected. Beatrice Rensi had been imprisoned in a convent at Montefiascone; on the 22d of September she told the prioress that prayers might be held for the

soul of the Holy Father; the latter informed the bishop of the place, and soon the whole town was in an uproar. Late in the afternoon couriers brought the news that Ganganelli had suddenly died at eight o'clock in the morning; the body began to putrefy so promptly that the usual ceremonies of kissing the pope's feet and the transfer to St. Peter's became impossible! The most curious effects of the girl's predictions appeared however, when the Conclave was held to elect a successor. Many Cardinals were extremely anxious that Braschi should not be elected, lest this should be interpreted as a confirmation of the prediction, and hence as the work of the Evil One; others again looked upon the girl's words as an indication from on high; they carried the day. Braschi was really chosen, and ascended the throne as Pius VI. The commission, however, continued the work of investigation, and finally acquitted the Jesuits of the charge of collusion; Beatrice Rensi's predictions were declared to be supernatural, but suggested by the Father of Lies, the accused were all set[Pg 329] free. The Bishop of Montefiascone, Maury, reported officially in 1804 that the girl had received a pension from Rome until the French invasion, then she left the convent in which she had peacefully and quietly lived so long, and was not heard of again.

The famous predictions of Jacques Cazotte, a man of high literary renown and the greatest respectability, were witnessed by persons of unimpeachable character and have been repeatedly mentioned as authentic by eminent writers. Laharpe—not the tutor of the Russian Emperor Alexander—reports them fully in his *Œuvres choisies*, etc. (i. p. 62); so do Boulard, in his *Encycl. des gens du Monde*, and William Burt, who was present when they were made, in his "Observations on the Curiosities of Nature." It is well known that Cazotte had joined the sect of Martinists, and among these enthusiasts increased his natural sensitiveness and his religious fervor. With a mind thus predisposed to receive strong impressions from outside, and filled with fearful apprehensions of the future, it was no wonder that he should fall suddenly into a trance and thus be enabled by extraordinary magical influences to predict the horrors of the Revolution, the sad fate of the king and the queen, and his own tragic end.

The report of his predictions as made by Jean de Laharpe, who only died in 1823, and with his well-established character and high social standing vouched for the genuineness of his experience, is substantially as follows: He had been invited, in 1788, to meet at the[Pg 330] palace of the Duchess de Gramont some of the most remarkable personages of the day, and found himself seated by the side of Malesherbes. He noticed at a corner of the table Cazotte, apparently in a deep fit of musing, from which he was only roused by the frequent toasts, in which he was forced to join. When at last the guests seemed to be overflowing with fervent praises of modern philosophy and its brilliant victory over old religious superstitions, Cazotte suddenly rose and in a solemn tone of voice and with features agitated with deep emotion said to them: "Gentlemen, you may rejoice, for you will all see that great and imposing revolution, which you so much desire. You, M. Condorcet, will expire lying on the floor of a subterranean prison. You, M. N., will die of poison; you, M. N., will perish by the executioner's hand on the scaffold." They cried out: "Who on earth has made you think of prisons, poison, and the executioner? What have these things to do with philosophy and the reign of reason, which we anticipate and on which you but just now congratulated us?" "That is exactly what I say," replied Cazotte, "in the name of philosophy, of reason, of humanity, and of freedom, all these things will be done, which I have foretold, and they will happen precisely when reason alone will reign and have its temples." "Certainly," replied Chamfort, "you will not be one of the priests." "Not I," answered the latter, "but you, M. de Chamfort, will be one of them and deserve to be one; you will cut your veins in

twenty-two places[Pg 331] with your razor, and yet die only several months after that desperate operation. You, M. Vicque d'Azyr, will not open your veins, because the gout in your hands will prevent it, but you will get another person to open them six times for you the same day, and you will die in the night succeeding. You, M. Nicolai, will die on the scaffold, and you, M. Bailly, and you, M. Malesherbes." "God be thanked," exclaimed M. Richer, "it seems M. Cazotte only deals with members of the Academy." But Cazotte replied instantly: "You also, M. Richer, will die on the scaffold, and they who sentence you, and others like you, will be nevertheless philosophers." "And when is all this going to happen?" asked several guests. "Within at most six years from to-day," was the reply. Laharpe now asked: "And about me you say nothing, Cazotte?" The latter replied: "In you, sir, a great miracle will be done; you will be converted and become a good Christian." These words relieved the company, and all broke out into merry laughter. Now the Duchess of Gramont also took courage, and said: "We women are fortunately better off than men, revolutions do not mind us." "Your sex, ladies," answered Cazotte, "will not protect you this time, and however careful you may be not to be mixed up with politics, you will be treated exactly like the men. You also, Duchess, with many ladies before and after you, will have to mount the scaffold, and more than that, they will carry you there on the hangman's cart, with your hands bound behind your back." The[Pg 332] duchess, perhaps looking upon the whole as a jest, said, smiling: "Well, I think I shall at least have a coach lined with black." "No, no," replied Cazotte, "the hangman's cart will be your last carriage, and even greater ladies than you will have to ride in it." "Surely not princesses of the royal blood?" asked the duchess. "Still greater ones," answered Cazotte. "But they will not deny us a confessor?" she continued. "Yes," replied the other, "only the greatest of all who will be executed will have one." "But what will become of you, M. Cazotte?" asked the guests, who began at last to feel thoroughly uncomfortable. "My fate," was the reply, "will be the fate of the man who called out, Woe! over Jerusalem, before the last siege, and Woe! over himself, while a stone, thrown by the enemy, ended his life." With these words Cazotte bowed and withdrew from the room. However much of the details may have been subsequently added to the prediction, the fact of such a prophecy has never yet been impugned, and William Burt, who was a witness of the scene, emphatically endorses the account.

Even the stern Calvinists have had their religious prophets, among whom Du Serre is probably the most interesting. He established himself in 1686 in the Dauphiné, but extended his operations soon into the Cevennes, and thus prepared the great uprising of Protestants there in 1688, which led to fearful war and general devastation. Special gifts of prophecy were accorded to a few generally uneducated persons; but in[Pg 333] these they appeared very strikingly, so that, for instance, many young girls belonging to the lowest classes of society, and entirely unlettered, were not only able to foretell coming events, but also to preach with great eloquence and to interpret Holy Writ. These phenomena became numerous enough to induce the *camisards*, as the rebellious Protestants of the Cevennes were called, finally to form a regular system of inspiration. They spoke of four degrees of ecstasis: the first indication, the inspiring breath, the prediction, and the gifts; the last was the highest. The spirit of prophecy could be communicated by an inspired person to others; this was generally done by a kiss. Even children of three and four years were enabled to foretell the future, and persevered, although they were often severely punished by their parents, whom the authorities held responsible for their misconduct, as it was called. (*Theâtre Sacré des Cevennes*, p. 66.)

Nor has this gift of prophesying been noticed only in men of our own faith and our race.

An author whose trustworthiness cannot be doubted for a moment, Jones Forbes, gives in his "Oriental Memoirs" (London, 1803), an instance of the prophesying power of East Indian magicians, which is as well authenticated as remarkable. A Mr. Hodges had accidentally made the acquaintance of a young Brahmin, who, although unknown to the English residents, was famous among the natives for his great gifts. They became fast friends, and the Indian never ceased to[Pg 334] urge Hodges to remain strictly in the path of duty, as by so doing he was sure to reach the highest honors. In order to enforce his advice he predicted that he would rise from the post he then occupied as Resident in Bombay to higher places, till he would finally be appointed governor. The prediction was often discussed among Hodges' friends, and when fortune favored him and he really obtained unusually rapid preferment, he began to rely more than ever on the Indian's prediction. But suddenly a severe blow shattered all his hopes. A rival of his, Spencer, was appointed governor, and Hodges, very indignant at what he considered an act of unbearable injustice, wrote a sharp and disrespectful letter to the Governor and Council of the Company. The result was his dismissal from the service and the order to return to Europe. Before embarking he sent once more for his friend, who was then living at one of the sacred places, and when he came informed him of the sad turn in his affairs and reproached him with his false predictions. The Indian, however, was in no way disconcerted, but assured Hodges that although his adversary had put his foot on the threshold, he would never enter the palace, but that he, Hodges, would, in spite of appearances, most surely reach the high post which he had promised him years ago. These assurances produced no great effect, and Hodges was on the point of going on board the ship that was to carry him to Europe, when another vessel sailed into the harbor, having accomplished the voyage out in a most unu[Pg 335]sually short time, and brought new orders from England. The Court of Directors had disapproved of Spencer's conduct as Governor of Bengal, revoked his appointment, dismissed him from service, and ordered Hodges to be installed as Governor of Bombay! From that day the Brahmin obtained daily more influence over the mind of his English friend, and the latter undertook nothing without having first consulted the strangely gifted native. It became, however, soon a matter of general remark, that the Brahmin could never be persuaded to refer in his predictions to the time beyond the year 1771, as he had never promised Hodges another post of honor than that which he now occupied. The explanation of his silence came but too soon, for in the night of the 22d of February, 1772, Hodges died suddenly, and thus ended his brilliant career, verifying his friend's prophecy in every detail.

THE DIVINING ROD.

The relations in which some men stand to Nature are sometimes so close as to enable them to make discoveries which are impossible to others. This is, for instance, the case with persons who feel the presence of waters or of metals. The former have, from time immemorial, generally used a wand, the so-called divining rod, which, according to Pliny, was already known to the ancient Etruscans as a means for the discovery of hidden springs. An Italian author, Amoretti, who has given special attention to this subject, states that[Pg 336] at least every fifth man is susceptible to the influence of water and metals, but this is evidently an overestimate. In recent times many persons have been known to possess this gift of discovering hidden springs or subterranean masses of water, and these have but rarely employed an instrument. Catharine Beutler, of Thurgovia, in Switzerland, and Anna Maria Brugger of the same place, were both so seriously affected by the presence of water that they fell into violent nervous excitement when they

happened to cross places beneath which larger quantities were concealed, and became perfectly exhausted. In France a class of men, called *sourciers*, have for ages possessed this instinctive power of perceiving the presence of water, and others, like the famous Abbé Paramelle, have cultivated the natural gift till they were finally enabled, by a mere cursory examination of a landscape, to ascertain whether large masses of water were hidden anywhere, and to indicate the precise spots where they might be found.

Why water and metals should almost always go hand in hand in connection with this peculiar gift, is not quite clear; but the staff of Hermes, having probably the form of the divining rod, was always represented as giving the command over the treasures of the earth, and the Orphic Hymn (v. 527) calls it, hence, the golden rod, producing wealth and happiness. On the other hand, the *Aquæ Virgo*, the nymph of springs, had also a divining rod in her hand, and Numa, inspired by a water nymph, established the worship of waters in[Pg 337] connection with that of the dead. For here, also, riches and death seem to have entered into a strange alliance. Del Rio, in his *Disquisitiones magicæ*, mentions thus the Zahuri of Spain, the lynx-eyed, as he translates the name, who were able on Wednesdays and Saturdays to discover all the veins of metals or of water beneath the surface, all hidden treasures, and corpses in their coffins. There is at least one instance recorded where a person possessed the power to see even more than the Zahuris. This was a Portuguese lady, Pedegache, who first attracted attention by being able to discover subterranean springs and their connections, a gift which brought her great honors after she had informed the king of all the various supplies of water which were hidden near a palace which he was about to build. Shafts were sunk according to her directions, and not only water was found, but also the various soils and stones which she had foretold would have to be pierced. She also seems to have cultivated her talent, for we hear of her next being able to discover treasures, even valuable antique statues, in the interior of houses, and finally she reached such a degree of intuition, that she saw the inner parts of the human body, and pointed out their diseases and defects.

Savoy seems to be a specially favorable region for the development of this peculiar gift, for if in Cornwall one out of every forty men is believed to possess it, in Savoy the divining rod is in the hands of nearly every one. But what marks the talent in this case as pecu[Pg 338]liar is that it is by no means limited to the discovery of water, but extends to other things likewise. A very wealthy family, called Collomb, living in Cessens, boasted of more than one member who was able, by the aid of the rod and with bandaged eyes, to discover not only pieces of money, but even needles, evidently cases of personal susceptibility to the presence of metals, aided by electric currents. Once, at least, the gift was made useful. A number of bags filled with wheat had been stolen from a neighboring house, and the police were unable to discover the hiding-place. At the request of his friends one of the Collombs undertook the search with the aid of the divining rod; he soon found the window through which the bags had been handed out; he then followed the track along the banks of the river Cheran, and asserted that the thief had crossed to the other side. At that time nothing more was discovered; but soon afterwards a miller living across the river was suspected, the bags were found, and the culprit sent to the galleys. (*Revue Savoisienne*, April 15, 1852.) Dr. Mayo mentions, mainly upon the authority of George Fairholm, a number of instances in which persons belonging to all classes of society have exhibited the same gift, but ascribes its efficacy to the presence of currents of Od.

The divining rod, originally a twig of willow or hazel, is often made of metal, and the impression prevails that in such cases an electric current, arising from the subterranean water or

metals, enters the diviner's body by[Pg 339] the feet, passes through him, and finally affects the two branches of the rod, which represent opposite poles. It is certain that when the electric current is interrupted, the power of the divining rod is suspended. Dr. Mayo tells us of a lady of his acquaintance in Southampton, who at his request used a divining rod of copper and iron wire, made after the fashion of the usual hazel rod; it answered the purpose fully, but when the ends touched by her hands were covered with sealing-wax, it became useless; as soon as she put her fingers in contact with the unprotected wire, the power instantly returned. This certainly seemed to be strong evidence of the existence of an electric current. Nevertheless, many believe that the divining rod acts in all cases simply as an extension of the arms, and thus serves to make the vibrations of the muscles more distinct. It is by this theory they explain the fact which has caused serious trouble to careful inquirers like Count Tristan and Dr. Mayo, that the gift of using the divining rod varies with the state of health in the individuals in whom it has been discovered.[Pg 340]

VII.

POSSESSION.

"Thereupon St. Theophilus made a pact with the Devil."—ACTA, S. S., 4 February.

Many forms of insanity, it is well known, are accompanied by the fixed idea that the sufferer is continually associated with another being, a friend or an enemy, a man, an animal, or a mere shadow. Somnambulists, also, not unfrequently fancy that they obtain their exceptional knowledge of hidden things, not by intuition or instinct, but through the agency of a medium, whom they look upon as an angel or a demon. There is, however, a third class of cases, far more formidable than either of those mentioned, in which the mind is disturbed, and magic phenomena are produced by an agency apparently entirely independent of the patient himself. Such are possession, vampirism and zoanthropy—three frightful forms of human suffering, which are fortunately very rare, being limited to certain localities in space, to a few short periods in time, and to men of the lowest grade only.

Possession is that appalling state of mind which makes the patient believe that he is in the power of a foreign evil being, which has for the time full control over his body. This power it abuses by plaguing the[Pg 341] body in every imaginable way, by distorting the features till they assume a scornful, diabolical expression, and above all, by causing the sufferer to give utterance to cynical remarks and horrible blasphemy. All these phenomena are based upon the division of the patient's individuality, which cannot be remedied by any effort of his own, and which makes him look upon the evil principle in his nature as something outside of himself, and no longer under his control. The phenomena which accompany possession are too fearful in their nature, and yet at the same time too exceptional to keep us altogether and easily from believing, as many thoughtful and even pious men have thought, that in these cases a real demon takes possession of the afflicted. The bitter hatred against religion, which is always a symptom of possession, would naturally tend to enforce such a presumption. The possessed know not only their own sins, but

also those of the bystanders, and use this knowledge with unsparing bitterness and cruel scorn; at the same time they feel the superiority of others with whom they may come in contact, as the demoniacs of the Bible never failed to recognize in Christ the Son of God. From the numerous cases of modern possession which have been investigated, we derive the following information as to its real nature. Possession is invariably a kind of insanity, which is accompanied by exceptional powers, producing magic phenomena; it is also invariably preceded by some grave disorder or dangerous disease. The former may be of purely men[Pg 342]tal nature, for violent coercion of will, sudden and subversive nervous shocks or long-continued enforcement of a hateful mode of life, are apt to produce the sad effect. Hence its frequent occurrence in monasteries, orphan asylums and similar institutions, where this kind of insanity is, moreover, liable to become epidemic. At other times the cause is a trivial one, and then a peculiar predisposition must be presumed which only needed a decisive act to bring the disturbed mind to its extremity. But possession is not merely an affection of the mind, it is also always a disease of the body, which in the bewildered and disordered imagination of the patient becomes personified in the shape of a demon; hence the graver the disease, the fiercer the demon. As sickness worries the patient, robs him of his appetite and makes all he used to like distasteful to him, so the demon also suffers no enjoyment; interferes with every pleasure, and consistently rages especially against religion, which alone could give consolation in such cases. The outbursts of rage in demoniacs, when efforts are made to exorcise or convert them, even although nothing but prayers may be attempted, is ascribed to an instinctive repugnance of the sufferers for means which they feel to be utterly inappropriate to their case—very much as if men, mad with hunger, were to be fed with moral axioms. Possession is finally sometimes limited to parts of the body; as when a demoniac is spoken of who was dumb (Matt. ix. 32), and another who was blind and dumb (Matt. xii. 22). In other cases the[Pg 343] body is endowed with supernatural strength, and four or five powerful men have been known to be scarcely able to hold a frail girl of fifteen.

A peculiar feature in possession is, that during the most violent attacks of apparent fury, accompanied by hideous cries and frightful contortions, the pulse is not quickened and the physical strength of the patient does not seem in the least diminished. The disease, however, naturally affects his whole system and exhausts it in time. The possessed man, who unlike somnambulists retains, during the paroxysms, full control over all his senses, never speaks of the demon that possesses him, but the demon speaks of him as of a third person, and at the same time of himself, a feature which powerfully contributes to the popular belief of actual demons dwelling in these unfortunate persons. And yet, after the paroxysm is over, the poor sufferer knows nothing of the horrible things he has done, and of the fearful words he has uttered; if he is told what has occurred, he is terribly shocked, and bitterly repents his misdoings.

The paroxysms are twofold: in the body they appear as violent convulsions accompanied by a contraction of the throat and the *globulus hystericus*; saliva forms in abundance, black, coal-like lumps are thrown up and the breath is hot and ill-smelling. In this mental form they appear as a raging of the demon against the possessed and against religion—in fact a struggle of the patient with himself and his former convictions. Oc[Pg 344]casionally the good principle within him assumes, in contradistinction to the demon who personifies the evil principle, the form of a guardian angel, who comforts the poor sufferer as he is tossed to and fro like a ship in a tempest, and promises him assistance. Nor is the demon always alone; there may be, as Holy Writ teaches, seven, thousands, or their name may be "Legions," for these visionary beings are only so many representatives of certain evil principles at work in the soul of the possessed. Some

patients have been enabled to trace this connection and to discover that each symptom of their disease was thus personified by a separate demon to whom in their paroxysms they ascribed the infliction: Lucifer caused pricking and stinging pains, Anzian tearing and scratching, Junian convulsions of limbs, etc. The fearful suffering which demoniacs have to undergo and the still more harassing conflicts in their soul drive them frequently to despair and engender thoughts of suicide. During these paroxysms the struggle between light and darkness, heaven and hell, eternal bliss and damnation, angel and devil, is carried on with such energy and dramatic truthfulness that those who witness it are apt to become deeply excited and often suffer not a little from the violent transitions from sympathy to horror and from heartfelt pity to unspeakable disgust. As soon as the dualism in the soul relaxes, and with it the disease becomes milder, the demon also grows more quiet; a happy moment of rest ensues, which the exorciser calls the period of conver[Pg 345]sion; and when this has once taken place the patient is no longer able to distinguish the demon as apart from himself, the contradistinction exists no more, and he is reconciled to his true self.

There is no instance known in which an intelligent, well-educated person has become possessed; the terrible misfortune falls exclusively upon rude and coarse natures, a fact which explains the coarseness and rudeness of so-called demons. Medicinal remedies are seldom of much avail, as the disease has already reached a stage in which the mind is at least as much affected as the body. Exorcising has frequently been successful, but only indirectly, through the firm faith which the sufferer still holds in his innermost heart. The great dogma that Christ has come into this world to destroy the works of the Evil One, has probably been inculcated into his mind from childhood up, and can now begin once more, after long obscuration, to exercise its supreme power. The cure depends, however, not only on the presence of such faith, but rather on the supremacy which the idea of Christ's power gains over the idea of the devil's power. Hence the symptoms of possession not unfrequently cease under a fervent invocation of the Saviour, if the exorciser is able by his superior energy of will to create in the patient a firm faith in the power of the holy name. This expulsion of the demon is, of course, nothing more than the abandonment of the struggle by the evil principle in the sufferer's soul, by which the good impulses become once[Pg 346] more dominant, and a healthy, natural state of mind and body is restored.

It must, however, not be overlooked that the views of possession have changed essentially in different nations and ages. At the time of Christ's coming the belief in actual possession, the dwelling of real demons in the body of human beings, was universal, and to this belief the language of Holy Writ naturally adapts its records of miracles.

The Kabbalah as well as the Talmud contain full accounts of a kingdom of hell, opposed to the heavenly kingdom, with Smaal as head of all satanism or evil spirits, defying Jehovah. The latter are allowed to dwell upon earth side by side with the sons of Adam, and occasionally to possess them and to live in their souls as in a home of their own. In other cases it was the spirit of a deceased person which, condemned for sins committed during life to wander about as a demon, received permission to enter the soul of a living being. The New Testament mentions at least seven cases of possession, from the woman whose suffering was simply ascribed to the Devil's agency, to Mary Magdalene who was relieved of seven demons, and the Gadarene, who had a "legion" of devils. The Catholic Church also has always taught the existence of evil spirits; doctrinal works, however, mention only one, Diabolus or Satanas. Although the Church adheres consistently to the theory of actual possession, it teaches that demons cannot wholly take possession of a human soul, but[Pg 347] only force it to obedience or accept voluntary submission.

Hence their power over the body also never becomes absolute, but is always shared with the soul of the sufferer. Among Protestants many orthodox believers look upon possession as a mere delusion practised by the Evil One; others admit its existence, but attribute it to the souls of deceased persons and not to demons. This was the doctrine of the ancient Greeks, who, like the Romans, seem to have known but a few rare cases of possession, which they ascribed to departed spirits. Thus Philostratus, in his life of Apollonius (l. iii. ch. 38), mentions a young man who was for two years possessed by a demon pretending to be the spirit of a soldier killed in battle. Nearly all nations on earth have records of possession. Thus cases occurring in China and Japan and in the Indies are attributed to the influence of certain deities, as the Hindoos know neither a hell nor a devil. Early travelers, like Blom and Rochefort, report, in like manner, that in some of the islands of the Caribbean Sea evil spirits are believed to obtain at times possession of women and then to enable them to foretell the future. According to Ellis the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands were much plagued by evil spirits dwelling in some of their brethren.

It was only towards the latter part of the last century that possession was found to be nothing more than a peculiar disease arising from the combination of an unsound mind with an unsound body. This discovery[Pg 348] was first made by Farmer in England, and by Semler in Germany; since that time the symptoms of the character of the affection have been very generally studied and thoroughly investigated.

Thus it has been discovered that similar phenomena are occasionally observed in typhus and nervous fevers. First the patients fancy they feel somebody breathing by their side, or blowing cold air upon their head; after long unconsciousness they are apt to imagine that they are double, and have been known to hesitate where to carry the spoon containing their medicine. In still more marked cases, persons who have suffered from the effects of some great calamity, and have thus been brought to the verge of the grave, have even acted two different individualities, of which one was pious and the other impious, or one speaking the patient's native tongue and the other a foreign language. As they recovered and as the return of health brought back bodily and mental strength, this dualism also ceased to be exhibited during the paroxysm, and finally disappeared altogether.

Possession is generally announced some time beforehand by premonitory symptoms, but the first cause is not always easily ascertained. When we are told that certain cases have originated in a hastily spoken word, a fierce curse or an outburst of passion, we only learn thus what was the first occasion on which the malady has been noticed, but not what was the first cause. This lies almost invariably in moral corruption; the[Pg 349] lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of the heart are by far the most frequent sources of the frightful disease. Occasionally a very great and sudden grief, like the unexpected death of a beloved person, or too great familiarity with evil thoughts in books or in conversation, produce the same effect—in fact all the various causes which result in insanity may produce also possession. Nor must serious bodily injuries be forgotten. A student of the University of Halle considered himself possessed, and the case puzzled experienced physicians for some time, till it was ascertained that he had received a violent blow upon the head, which required trepanning. Before the operation could be undertaken, however, matter began to ooze out from the ear, and he suddenly was relieved from the paroxysms and all thoughts of possession. Convents are naturally very frequently scenes of possession—the inmates are either troubled by bitter remorse for sins which have led them to seek refuge in a holy place, where they cannot find peace, or they succumb to the rigor of severe discipline and are unable to endure the constant privation of food or sleep. The sin against the

Holy Ghost, which unfortunate persons have imputed to themselves, has produced many a case of possession. When the mind is thus predisposed by great anguish of soul or a long-continued inward struggle, the most trifling incident suffices in determining the outbreak of the disease. One patient became possessed because his wife told him to go to the Devil, and another[Pg 350] because he had in jest exorcised a demon in a playmate; now a man curses himself in a moment of passion, and then a boy drinks hastily a glass of cold water when overheated, and both fall victims to the disease.

The magic phenomena accompanying possession are by far the most remarkable within the whole range of modern magic, but a number of the more striking are frequently identical with those seen in religious ecstasy. Demoniacs also exhibit the traces of injuries inflicted by demons, as saints show the stigmas, and their wounds heal as little as those of stigmatized persons. They share in like manner with religious enthusiasts paroxysms during which they remain suspended in the air, fly up to the ceiling or are carried to great distances without touching the ground. The strength of the possessed is amazing. A monk, known in ecclesiastical history as Brother Rafael of Rimini, could not be bound by any ropes or chains; as soon as he was left alone he broke the strongest fetters, raced up the roof of the church, ran along the topmost ridge, and was often found sitting on the great bell, to which no one else had ever been able to gain access. At last the demons led him to the top of the steeple itself and were about to hurl him down, as he said; the abbot and his monks and an immense crowd of people assembled below, and besought him to invoke the aid of their patron saint so as to save body and soul. It does not appear by what miraculous influence a change was wrought in the poor man; but he did raise his voice,[Pg 351] which had not been heard to address a saint for many years, and instantly his mind returned, he found his way down to the church and was cured.

The most frequent symptom in possession is a strong antipathy against everything connected with religion; the holy names of God and Christ, the presence of priests, the singing of hymns and the reciting of prayers, excite intense pain, and provoke outbursts of fury. Even young children manifest this aversion, especially when they have previously been forced to attend church, and to engage in devotional exercises against their inclination. Hence it is, also, that paroxysms are most frequent at the regular hours of divine service, or break forth suddenly at the sight of a procession or the hearing of ringing bells. The symptom itself arises naturally from the imaginary conflict between a good and an evil principle, the latter being continually in arms against anything that threatens to crush its own power. All the other symptoms of this fearful disease occur, also, in St. Vitus' dance, in catalepsy, and even in ordinary trances; only they appear more marked, and make a greater impression upon bystanders, because they are apparently caused by a foreign agent, the possessing demon, and not by the patient himself. As the digestive organs are in all such cases sympathetically excited, and seriously affected, a desire for unnatural food is very frequent; the coarsest victuals are preferred; unwholesome, and even injurious substances are eagerly devoured; and medicines as well as strengthening food[Pg 352] are vehemently rejected. The sufferer is apt to interpret this as a new plague, his demon refusing him his legitimate sustenance, and compelling him to feed like an animal.

One of the most remarkable historical cases of apparent possession accompanied by magic phenomena, was that of Mirabeau's grandmother. Married when quite young to the old marquis, she tried after his death to protect herself against the temptations of the world, and of her own heart, by ascetic devotion. In her eighty-third year, she was attacked by gout which affected her brain, and she became insane, in a manner which according to the views of her days was called

possession. It was found necessary to shut her up in a bare room with a pallet of straw, where no one dared enter but her valet, a man seventy years old, with whom she had fallen in love! For, strange as it may appear, her fearful affliction restored to her the charms of youth; she, who had been reduced to a skeleton by old age and unceasing devotion, suddenly regained the plumpness of her early years, her complexion became fair and rosy, her eyes bright and even, her hair began to grow out once more. But, alas! her tongue, also, had changed; once afraid to utter a word that could be misinterpreted, the unruly member now sent forth speeches of incredible licentiousness, and overwhelmed the old servant with terms of endearment and coarse allusions. At the same time the retired ascetic became a violent blasphemer, and would allow no one to enter[Pg 353] her chamber who had not first denied God, threatening to kill him with her own hands if he refused. For four long years the unfortunate lady endured her fearful affliction, till death relieved her of her sufferings—but the student of history traces to her more than one of the startling features in the character of her grandson, the Mirabeau of the Revolution. (Bülau, *Geh. Gesch.*, xii.)

Relief is generally possible only when a powerful hold has been obtained upon the mind of the patient; after that appropriate remedies may be applied, and the body will be restored to its natural healthy condition. In a few cases remarkable incidents have produced a cure, such as the sudden clanking of chains, or a peculiarly fervent and impressive prayer. Even a night's sound sleep, induced by utter exhaustion, has had the happiest effect.

It seems as if, the train of thoughts once forcibly interrupted, a return to reason and an abandonment of fixed ideas become possible. Even a specially violent paroxysm may be salutary; probably by means of the severe struggle and extreme excitement which it is apt to produce. Many patients, under such circumstances, fall prostrate on the ground, losing their consciousness, and awake after a while as from a dream, without being able to remember what has happened. In other cases the hallucination continues to the last moment, and leads the patient to imagine that the demon leaves him in the shape of a black shadow, a bird, or an insect.[Pg 354] Such recoveries are almost invariably accompanied by violent efforts to discard foreign matters, which have been lodged in the system, and largely contributed to produce the disease. Exorcism has, of course, no direct effect: even when the power to "cast out devils" (Mark xvi. 17) is given, it is not said by what means the casting out is to be accomplished, except that it must be done in the Saviour's name. The formalities, carefully regulated and prescribed by many decrees of the Church since the third century, do no good except so far as they re-awaken faith, impart hope, and free the mind from distressing doubts. Ignatius Loyola never cured possessed persons otherwise than by prayer. As early as the sixteenth century a case is recorded clearly illustrating the true nature of exorcism. A demon was, after many fruitless attempts, at last driven out by a particle of the cross of our Saviour, but in departing he declared in a loud voice that he knew full well the nature of the piece of wood; it was cut from a gallows and not from the true cross, nevertheless he was forced to go because the exorcist willed it so, and the patient believed in his power. The same rule applies to cures achieved by relics; not that these had any effect, but in the long-cherished faith of the possessed, that they might and could wield such power over evil spirits.

The main point is here also the energy of will in the exorciser, and that this special gift is by no means confined to men was strikingly illustrated by a famous lady, the wife of a Marquis de la Croix, who was a[Pg 355] Spanish general and Viceroy of Galicia. In her youth a matchless beauty with almost perfect classical features, she retained an imposing carriage and bewitching grace throughout a long life, and even in old age commanded the admiration of all who came in

contact with her, not only by the superiority of her mind but also by the beauty of her eyes and the charming expression of her features. After the death of her husband she had much to endure from neglect in the great world, from sickness and from poverty, doubly hard to bear because standing in painful contrast to the splendor of her former life. The effects of a violent attack of sickness produced at last a partial disturbance of her mind, which showed itself in visions and the power to drive demons from the possessed. Her theory was that as the sins of men caused their diseases, and as the Devil was the cause of all sins, sickness was invariably produced by demoniac agency; she distinguished, however, between sufferers who had voluntarily given themselves up to sin, and thus to the service of the Devil, and those who had unawares fallen into his hands. Her practice was simple and safe: she employed nothing but fervent prayer and the imposition of hands, which she had moistened with holy water or oil. In the course of time she found her way to Paris, and there met, amid many skeptics, also with countless believers, some of whom belonged not only to the highest classes of society, but even to the sect of Free-thinkers, then prominent in the French capital. Such were Marshal[Pg 356] Richelieu, Count Schomberg, an intimate of the famous circle-meeting at Baron Holbach's house, and even the illustrious Buffon. When she was engaged in exorcising, her imposing stature, her imperious eye and commanding voice aided her at least as much as her perfect faith and striking humility, so that her patients, after a short demur, willingly looked upon her as a saint who might, if she but chose, perform miracles. With such a disposition obedience was no longer difficult, and the remarkable lady healed all manners of diseases, from modest toothache to rabid madness. Even when she was unsuccessful, as frequently happened, she won all hearts by her marvelous gentleness and humble piety. Thus, when a possessed man was brought to her in the presence of an illustrious company, and all her efforts and prayers were fruitless, she placed herself bravely between the enraged man and her friends whom he threatened to attack. He began to foam at the mouth, and amid fearful convulsions and dread imprecations, broke out into a long series of terrible accusations against the poor lady, charging her with all her real and a host of imaginary sins, till she could hardly stand up any longer. She listened, however, with her arms folded over her bosom and her eyes raised to heaven, and when the madman at last sank exhausted to the ground, she fell upon her knees and said to the bystanders: "Gentlemen, you see here a punishment ordained by God for the sins of my youth. I deserve this humiliation in your presence, and I would endure[Pg 357] it before all Paris if I could thus make atonement for my misdeeds." (*Mém. du Baron de Gleichen*, p. 149.)

One of the most fearful features of possession is its tendency to spread like contagion over whole communities. Many such cases are recorded in history. The monks of the Convent of Quercy were thus attacked in 1491, and suffered, from the oldest to the youngest, during four months, incredible afflictions. They ran like dogs through the fields, climbed upon trees, imitated the howling of wild beasts, spoke in unknown tongues, and foretold, at the same time, future events. (Goerres, iv. II.) In the year 1566 a similar malady broke out in the Orphan House at Amsterdam, and seventy poor children became possessed. They also climbed up the walls and on the roofs, swallowed hairs, needles, and pieces of glass and iron, and distorted their features and their limbs in a fearful manner. What, however, made the greatest impression upon the good citizens of the town were the magic phenomena connected with their disease. They spoke to the overseer and even to the chief magistrate of their secret affairs, made known plots hatched against the Protestants and foretold events which happened soon after. In a convent of nuns at Yssel in the Netherlands, a single nun, Maria de Sains, caused one of the most fearful calamities among her sisters that has ever been known. Naturally a woman of superior mind, but carried

away by evil passions, she finally succumbed to the struggle between the latter and the strict rules of her retreat;[Pg 358] she began to accuse herself of horrible crimes and excesses. The whole country was amazed, for she had passed for a great saint, and now, of a sudden, she confessed that she had murdered numberless little children, disinterred corpses, and carried poor girls to the meeting of witches. All these misdeeds, which existed only in her disordered imagination, she ascribed to the agency of a demon, by whom she was possessed, and before many weeks had passed, every nun and lay sister in the ill-fated convent was possessed in precisely the same manner!

One of the most recent cases of possession is reported by Bishop Laurent of Luxemburg, in a pamphlet on the subject. In the year 1843 a woman, thirty-four years old, was brought to him who had been possessed since her fifteenth year, and who exhibited the remarkable phenomenon that in her sound moments she spoke no other language but the patois of her native place, while in her paroxysms she used Latin, French, and German at will. When the good bishop threatened the demon, the latter attacked him in return, troubling him with nightly visits and suggesting to him sinful doubts of the existence of God and the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice. This fact shows how easily such disturbances of mind can be transferred to others, when disease or mental struggles have prepared a way. Fortunately the bishop first mastered his own doubts, and, thus strengthened, obtained the same mastery over the possessed woman. He commanded the demon[Pg 359] to come out of her, whereupon she fell into convulsions, speaking in a disguised tone of voice; but after a while drew herself up, and now her face was once more free from anguish, and "angel-like." Another bishop, who had been requested to exorcise possessed persons in Morzine, in the Chablais, was not so successful. At this place, in 1837, a little girl, nine years old, in consequence of a great fright, fell into a deathlike sleep, which returned daily, and lasted about fifteen minutes. A month later, another girl, eleven years old, was attacked in the same way, and soon the number of afflicted persons rose to twenty, all girls under twenty years. After a while they declared that they were possessed by demons, and ran wild through the fields, climbed to the top of lofty trees, and fell into violent convulsions. In vain did the local priest and his vicar attempt to arrest the evil; the girls laughed them to scorn. When the civil authorities interfered, they were met with insults and blows; the guilty were fined, but the number steadily increased, and now grown women also were found in the crowd. At last the official reports reached Paris, and the minister sent the chief superintendent of insane asylums to the village. He immediately distributed all the affected among the adjoining towns and hamlets, to break off the association, and sent the priest and his vicar to their superior, the bishop of Annecy. A few only of the women recovered, several died and one man also succumbed; others, when they returned to Morzine, relapsed, and in 1864 the malady began to spread once[Pg 360] more so fearfully that the bishop of Annecy himself came to exorcise the possessed. Seventy of them were brought to the church, where the most fearful scenes took place; howling and yelling filled the sacred building, seven or eight powerful men scarcely succeeded in bringing one possessed child to the altar, and when there, the demoniacs broke out in horrible blasphemies. The bishop, exhausted by the intense excitement, and suffering from serious contusions inflicted upon him by the unfortunate women, had to leave the place, unable to obtain any results. Even as late as 1869 two demons were solemnly exorcised upon an order from the bishop of Strasbourg, and with the consent of the prefect of the department. The ceremony took place in the Chapel of St. George, in the presence of the lady-abbesses, under the direction of the Vicar-General of the diocese, assisted by other dignitaries and the Superior of the Jesuits. The two boys who were to be relieved had long been plagued with fearful visions and publicly given

evidence of being possessed, for "twenty or thirty times they had been led into a public square in the presence of large crowds, and there they had pulled feathers out of a horrible monster which they saw above them in a threatening attitude; these feathers they had handed to the bystanders, who found that when they were burnt they left no ashes." When the two children were brought to the house of the Sisters of Charity, they became clairvoyant, and revealed to the good ladies, although they had never seen them before,[Pg 361] their family relations, their antecedents and many secrets. They also spoke in unknown tongues, and exhibited all the ordinary phenomena of possession. The official report containing these statements, and closing with their restoration to health and reason, is so far trustworthy as it is signed by several hundred persons, among whom the government authorities, officers, professors and teachers are not wanting.

There can be little doubt that the dancing mania which broke out repeatedly in various parts of the continent of Europe, was a kind of possession. The facts are recorded in history; the explanation only is left as a matter of discussion. In 1374, when a new and magnificent church was to be consecrated, in Liege, large numbers of people came from North Germany; "men and women, possessed by demons, half naked, wreaths on their heads, and holding each other's hands, performed shameless dances in the streets, the churches, and houses." When they fell down exhausted they had spasms, and convulsions; at their own request, friends came and pressed violently upon their chests, till they grew better. Their number soon reached thousands, and other thousands joined them in Holland and Brabant, although the priests frequently succeeded in exorcising them—whenever their mind was still sound enough to recall their early reverence for holy men and their faith in holy things. Some time before, the good people of Perugia had taken it into their heads that their sins required expiation, and had begun to scourge[Pg 362] themselves publicly in the most cruel manner. The Romans were infected soon after, and copied their example; from thence the contagion spread, and soon all over Italy men, women, and children were seen inflicting upon themselves fearful punishment in order to drive out the evil spirits by whom they fancied themselves possessed. Noble and humble, rich and poor, old and young, all joined the crowds which in the daytime filled squares and streets, and at night, under the guidance of priests, marched with waving banners, and blazing torches, in vast armies through the land. Nor can we shut our eyes to the fact that the Jumpers and Jerkers of the Methodist Church present to us instances of the same mental disorder, caused by over-excitement, which in earlier days was called possession, and that, hence, these aberrations, also, infinitely varied as they are, according to the temper of men and the habits of the locality in which they occur, must be numbered among the phenomena of modern magic.

VAMPIRISM.

Occasionally possession is not attributed to demons, but to deceased men who come by night from their graves, and suck the blood of their victims, whereupon the latter begin to decline and finally die a miserable death, while the buried man lives and thrives upon his ill-gotten food. This is vampirism, the name being derived from the once universal belief that there existed vampires, huge bats, who, whilst fanning sleeping men[Pg 363] with their soft wings, feasted upon their life's blood and only left them when they had turned into corpses. Popular credulity added a number of horrid details to the general outline, and believed that the wretched victims of vampirism became themselves after death vampires, and thus forever continued the fearful curse. It was long thought that vampirism was known only to the nations of the Slavic race, but recent

researches have discovered traces of it in the East Indies, and in Europe among the Magyars. Even the Sanscrit already appears to have had a term of its own for the vampires—Pysachas, "hostile beings, eager for the flesh and blood of living men, who gratify their cruel lust mainly at the expense of women when they are asleep, drunk, or insane."

Careful writers like Calmet and others have, it is true, always maintained that, while the existence of vampirism cannot be denied, the phenomena attending it are in all cases the creations of diseased minds only. On the other hand, it is a well-established fact that the bodies of so-called vampires, when exhumed, have been found free from corruption, while in all the corpses around them decomposition had long since begun. In the face of such facts vampirism cannot be dismissed as simply the product of heated and over-excited imaginations, although it must be admitted that its true nature is still to all intents and purposes a profound mystery. According to popular belief the unusual preservation of the corpses indicates that death has not yet[Pg 364] obtained full dominion over the bodies, and that hence the soul has not yet departed to its eternal home. A kind of lower organic life, it is said, continues, and as long as this lasts, the soul wanders about, as in a dream, among the familiar scenes of its earthly life and makes itself known to the friends of its former existence. The life thus extended requires blood in order to sustain itself, and hence the minds of those who come in magic contact with the soul of a vampire, become filled with sanguinary thoughts, which present themselves to their imagination as the desire to suck blood and thus lead to the actual performance. The fact that vampirism is epidemic, like many similar mental diseases, has led to the belief that the living are brought into close connection with the dead and are infected by them, while in reality there is no bond between them but a common misfortune. Nor must it be forgotten that in this disease, as in the plague, the mere thought of being seized often suffices to cause death without any warning symptoms, and hence the great number of deaths in localities where vampirism has been thought to prevail. For very few of those who are attacked succeed in escaping, and if they survive they retain for life the marks left by their wounds. The penalty, moreover, is not always undeserved; vampirism rarely if ever attacks men of pure hearts and sober minds; it is found, on the contrary, exclusively among semi-barbarous nations and only in persons of rude, savage, and sinful disposition.

Traces of vampirism have been discovered in the[Pg 365] most distant parts of the earth, and often without apparent connection. The "Bruholaks" of Greece, genuine vampires whose appearance was ascribed to the direct influence of the Evil One, may possibly have been imported by the numerous immigrants of Slavic origin (Huet, *Penseés Diverses*, Paris, 1722), but in Finland also the belief is, according to Castren, almost universal, that the spirits of the departed have the power to vex and torment persons in their sleep, and to afflict them with sorrow and disease. In the Sunda and Molucca islands genuine vampirism is well known, and the Dyaks of Borneo also believe in an evil spirit who sucks the blood of living persons till they expire.

Poland and Western Russia have, however, been for two centuries the stage on which most of these dread tragedies have occurred. Men and women were reported to have been seen in broad daylight sucking the blood of men and beasts, while in other cases dogs and even wolves were suspected of being upires or vampires, as blood-suckers are called in most Slavic dialects. The terror grew as these reports found their way into newspapers and journals, till fear drove men and women to resort to the familiar remedy of mixing blood with the meal used for their bread; they escaped not by any healing powers inherent in the horrid mixture, but thanks to the faith they had in the efficacy of the prescription and the moral courage exhibited in its application. To

prevent the spreading of the epidemic the bodies of the vampires were disinterred, and when[Pg 366] found bleeding, were decapitated or impaled or burned in public. In some parts of Hungary the disease appeared in the shape of a white spectre which pursued the patients; they declined visibly and died in a week or a fortnight. It was mainly in this country that physicians attending the disinterment of suspected bodies noticed the presence of more or less considerable quantities of blood, which was still fluid and actually caused the cheeks to look reddish. Some of the witnesses even thought they noticed an effort to breathe, faint pulsations, and a slight change of features; these were, however, evidently nothing more than the effects of currents of air which accompanied the opening of the coffin. It was here also that animals were first believed to have been attacked by vampires; cows were found early in the morning bleeding profusely from a wound at the neck, and horses standing in their stalls trembling, covered with white foam, and so thoroughly terrified as to become unfit for use.

Another period of excitement due to accounts of vampirism comprised the middle of last century, when all Europe was deeply agitated on the subject. The Emperor of Germany and other monarchs appointed committees of learned men to investigate the matter; theologians and skeptics, philosophers and physicians, took up the discussion, and hundreds of volumes were published on the mysterious question, but no satisfactory result was ever obtained. Many declared the whole a fable or merely the effect of diseased imaginations,[Pg 367] others looked upon it as a malignant and epidemic disease, and not a few as the unmistakable work of the devil. Learned men searched the writings of antiquity, and soon found more traces of the fearful disease than they had expected. They discovered that in Thessaly, Epirus, and some parts of the Pieria, men were reported by ancient writers as wandering about at night and tearing all whom they met to pieces. The Lamiæ of the Greeks and the Strigæ of the Romans evidently belonged to the same category, while the later Tympanites of the Greeks were persons who had died while under the ban of the church and were therefore doomed to become vampires. The Slavic population of Moravia and Bohemia was in those days especially rich in instances of vampirism, and so many occurred in Hungary that the Emperor Charles IV. intrusted the investigation of the matter to a prince of Würtemberg, before whom a number of cases were fully authenticated. Men who had died years before, were seen to return to their former homes, some in the daytime, some at night, and the following morning those whom they had visited were found dead and weltering in their blood. In a single village seventeen persons died thus within three months, and in many instances, when bodies were disinterred, they were found looking quite alive. At this time the Sorbonne at Paris also took up the subject, but came to no conclusion, save that they disapproved of the practice of disinterring bodies, "because vampires, as cataleptics, might be restored to life by bleeding or[Pg 368] magnetic treatment," according to the opinion of the learned Dr. Piérard. (*Revue Spirit.*, iv.)

Here we come at last to the grain of truth around which this mass of popular superstition has gradually accumulated, and the ignorance of which has caused hundreds of innocent human beings to die a miserable death. There can be no doubt that cases of "suspended animation" or apparent death have alone given rise to the whole series of fearful tales of vampirism. The very words of a recital belonging to the times, and to the districts where vampirism was prevalent, prove the force of this supposition. Erasmus Francisci states that, in the duchy of Krain, a man was buried and then suspected of being a vampire. When disinterred his face was found rosy, and his features moved as if they attempted to smile; even his lips opened as if gasping for air. A crucifix was held before his eyes and a priest called out with a loud voice: "Peace! This is Jesus

Christ who has rescued thy soul from the torment of hell, and suffered death for thee!" The sound seemed to penetrate to his ear, and slowly a few tears began to trickle down his cheeks. After a short prayer for his poor soul, his head was ordered to be cut off; a suppressed cry was heard, the body turned over as if still alive, and when the head was severed a quantity of blood ran into the grave. It was as clear a case of a living man who had been buried before death as has ever been authenticated. Nor are such cases as rare as is popularly believed. High authorities assure us that,[Pg 369] for instance, after imperfect poisoning, in several kinds of suffocation, and in cases of new-born children who become suddenly chilled, a state of body is produced which presents all the symptoms of complete suspension of the functions of life. Such apparent death is, according to the same high medical authority, a period of complete rest, based upon a suspension of the activity of the heart, the lungs, and all spontaneous functions, extending frequently to the sense of touch, and the intellect even. At the same time the natural heat of the body sinks until it seems to have disappeared altogether. The duration of this exceptional state is uncertain, at times the patient awakes suddenly, and in full possession of all his faculties; in other cases external means have to be employed to restore life. Among many well-authenticated cases of this kind, two of special interest are mentioned by Dr. Mayo. Cardinal Espinosa, the minister of Philip II. of Spain, died after a short period of suffering. His rank required that he should be embalmed, and his body was opened for the purpose. At the moment when lung and heart were laid open to view, the surgeon observed that the latter was still beating, and the Cardinal, awaking, had actually strength enough to seize with his hand the knife of the operator. The other case is that of a well-known French writer, the Abbé Prévost, who fell down dead in the forest of Chantilly. His apparently lifeless body was found, and carried to a priest's house in the neighborhood. The surgeon ascribed his death to apoplexy; but the[Pg 370] authorities ordered a kind of coroner's inquest, and the body was opened. During the operation the Abbé suddenly uttered a cry of anguish—but it was too late!

If a certain number of such cases of apparent death has really given rise to the faith in vampirism, then it is equally possible to suppose, that this kind of trance—for which there may exist a special predisposition in one or the other race—may become at times epidemic. Persons of peculiar nervousness will be ready to be affected, and a locality in which this has occurred may soon obtain an unenviable reputation. Even where the epidemic does not appear in full force, a disturbed state of the nervous system will be apt to lead to dreams by night, and to gossip in the daytime, on the fatally attractive subject, and the patient will soon dream, or really imagine, that a person who has died of the disease has appeared to him by night, and drawn his strength from him, or, in his excited fancy, sucked his life's blood. By such means even the popular way of speaking of nocturnal visits made by the "vampire's ghost" is not so entirely unfounded as would appear at first sight, and the superstition is easily shown to be not altogether absurd, but to be based upon a small substructure of actual truth.

It is remarkable, however, that the Germanic race has never furnished any instances of vampirism, although their ancient faith in a Walhalla, where their departed heroes feast sumptuously, and their custom to place food in the graves of their friends would have[Pg 371] seemed most likely to reconcile them to the idea that men continue to live in their graves.

How sadly persistent, on the other hand, such superstitions are among the lower races, and in specially ignorant communities, may be gathered from the fact that, as late as 1861, two corpses were disinterred by the peasants of a village of Galicia, and decapitated. The people believed them to be vampires, and to have caused a long-protracted spell of bad weather!

ZOANTHROPY.

Even more fearful yet than vampirism is the disease, very common already in the days of antiquity, which makes men think that they have changed into beasts, and then act as such, according to the logic of insanity. Petronius is probably the first to mention, in his "Feast of Trimalchio," a case of lycanthropy, when Niceros relates how someone who was journeying with him threw off his garments, changed into a wolf and ran away into the forest. When he returned home, his account continues, he found that a wolf had fallen upon his flock, but had been wounded by a servant in the neck with a lance. Thereupon he goes to inquire after his fellow-traveler, and finds him sick in bed with a physician by his side, who binds up an ugly wound in his neck. The well-known writer took this episode from the Arcadians, a rude nation of shepherds, whose flocks were frequently attacked by wolves, and among whom stories of men changed into wild beasts, were quite current.[Pg 372] Nor must we forget, among historic personages, the daughter of King Prœtus of Argos, who believed herself changed into a cow; and of Nebuchadnezzar, who according to his own touching account "was driven from meat, did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws." (Daniel iv. 33.) The early days of Christianity are naturally full of incidents of this kind, but what is remarkable, zoanthropy was then already treated as a mere delusion. The holy man Macarius once saw a large procession approaching his hermitage in Egypt; it was headed by a number of persons who led a large and imposing-looking woman by a bridle, and followed by a crowd of people of all ages. When they came near they told his disciples that the woman had been changed into a mare, and had thus remained for three days and nights without food—would the saint pray over her and restore her to her natural condition? The delusion was so forcibly contagious that the disciples also forthwith saw a mare, and not a woman, and refused to admit the animal to the presence of the hermit! Fortunately the latter had retained his self-control; he rebuked his followers, saying: "You are the real beasts, that imagine you see something which does not exist. This woman has not been changed, but your eyes are deluded." Then he poured holy water over her, and at once everybody saw her once more in her natural shape. He dismissed her and her escort with the words: "Go[Pg 373] more frequently to church and take the holy sacrament; then you will escape such fearful punishment."

During the Middle Ages a similar disease existed in many parts of Europe; men were changed into dogs or wolves, sometimes as a divine punishment for great crimes, at other times in consequence of a delusion produced by Satan. Such unfortunate men walked on all fours, attacked men and beasts, but especially children, killed and devoured them. They actually terrified many people into believing as confidently in this delusion as they believed in it themselves! For this is one of the specially fearful magic phenomena of zoanthropy that it is apt to produce in healthy persons the same delusion as in the sufferer. Many cases also are recorded of persons lying in deep sleep, produced by narcotic ointments, who, seeing visions, fancied that they were acting like wolves. In the year 1598 such a disease raged as an epidemic in the Jura mountains, till the French Parliament determined to make an end of it by treating all the afflicted either as insane or as persons possessed by the devil and therefore deserving instant death. Among Slavic nations and the Magyars lycanthropy is so closely connected with vampirism that it is not always easy to draw the line between the two diseases. There can be no doubt, however, that it is merely a variety of possession, arising from the same unhappy state in which dualism is developed in the soul, and two wills contend with each other for superiority to the grievous injury of mind and body. The only dis[Pg 374]tinctive feature is this, that in lycanthropy not only

the functions of the brains but also those of the skin are disordered, and hence an impression arises that the latter is hairy and shaggy after the manner of wild beasts.

The German Währwolf (were-wolf or man-wolf) is the same as the lycanthropos of the Scythians and Greeks and the *versipellis* of the Romans; he was in German mythology connected with Woden. Hence, probably, the readiness with which the disease during the Middle Ages took hold of the minds of Germans; but at that period nearly all the nations of Europe firmly believed in the reality of such changes.

As late even as the beginning of the sixteenth century cases of this kind occurred in France, where the possessed were known as *loups-garoux*. A young man of Besançon was thus brought before the Councilor of State, *De l'Ancre*, at Bordeaux, and accused of roving like a wild animal through the neighboring forests. He confessed readily that he was a huntsman in the service of his invisible master, the devil, who had changed him into a wolf and forced him to range by the side of another more powerful wolf through the country. The poor fellow shared the usual fate of his fellow-sufferers, who were either subjected to a sharp treatment of exorcism or simply executed as heretical criminals.

In our day lycanthropy is almost entirely limited to Servia and Wallachia, Volhynia and White Russia. There, however, the disease breaks out frequently anew,[Pg 375] and popular belief knows a variety of means by which a man may be changed into a wolf; the animal differs, however, from a genuine wolf in his docked tail and his marked preference for the blood of young children.

In Abyssinia there exists, according to Pearce, a belief that men are occasionally changed into hyenas—the wolves of that country—but this sad privilege is limited to workers in clay and iron, called Booda among the Amharas, who wear a gold earring of special form as a distinction from other inferior castes.

It will thus be seen that, like all other varieties of possession, zoanthropy also is simply a kind of insanity, and our amusement at the marvelous conduct of werewolves will vanish, if we recall the entire change produced in man by the loss of reason. In that sad condition he endures fatigue, cold or heat, and hunger as no healthy man ever can learn to do; he does not mind the severest castigation, for his body is almost insensible, it ceases to be susceptible to contagious diseases and requires, in sickness, double or treble doses of medicine. If we once know the precise nature of an insane person's hallucination, his actions will be apt to appear quite consistent, and thus lycanthropy also not only produces the fine connection of a change into a wolf, but causes the sufferer to conduct himself in all his ways like the animal which he represents.[Pg 376]

VIII.

MAGNETISM.

"Great is the power of the hand."—

St. Augustine, *Op.*, iv. 487.

Mesmer, who was the first to make the anæsthetic effects of certain passages of the hand over the bodies of patients known to the public, sought originally to explain them by the agency of electricity; but as early as 1773 he ascribed them to magnetism. From that day he employed magnets, and by passing them over the affected parts of his patients, he performed remarkable cures for many years in the city of Vienna. He looked upon the magnet as the physician, which cured the patient in the same way in which it attracted iron. Soon after, however, he became acquainted with the famous Father Gassner, of Ratisbon, who had obtained precisely the same results, without a magnet, by simple manipulations, and, henceforth, he also treated his patients with the hand only; but he retained the old name, looking now upon himself, and others who were endowed in the same manner, as possessing the powers of a strong magnet. In the meantime one of his pupils, the Marquis de Puységur, had quite accidentally discovered the peculiar nature of somnambulism, and[Pg 377] with rare foresight profited by the moments of clear consciousness which at times interrupted the trance, in order to learn from his patients themselves the means of curing their diseases. He had from that moment devoted all the leisure of his life to the study of these singular but most beneficial phenomena, employing only the simplest manipulations in place of the more exciting means used by Mesmer, and doing an immense amount of good by his judicious cures.

Mesmer, in the course of time, adopted the better method of his former pupil, and now his system was complete. He used magnetism for purely practical purposes: he cured diseases by throwing well-qualified persons into the peculiar sleep produced by magnetizing them, and availed himself of the effects of this half-sleep upon their varied constitutions, for his curative purposes. At the same time, however, he ascribed the influence which he claimed to have over persons whom he had thus magnetized, to a most delicate, all-pervading medium; this, he maintained, was the sole cause of motion, light, heat, and life itself in the universe, and this he stated he was communicating by his process of magnetizing in a sufficient degree to his patients to produce startling but invariably beneficial results. It is well known how his removal from Vienna, where he had begun his remarkable career, to Paris, increased in almost equal proportions the number of enthusiastic admirers, and of bitter adversaries. In spite of an unfavorable judgment rendered by a committee of the[Pg 378] Academy in 1784, his new doctrines spread rapidly through all the provinces; so-called Harmonic Societies were formed in almost every town, and numerous institutions sprang up founded upon the new system of magnetizing patients. It is curious that of the nine members of that committee, among whom Franklin was not the least renowned, only one, the great savant Jussieu, refused to sign the report "because it was founded upon a few isolated facts," and sent in a separate memoir, in which he described animal heat as the universal agent of life. Equally curious objections were made by others; thus in another report of the Academy, the king was requested to prohibit the practice of magnetism, because it was "dangerous to the morals of the people," and in the great hospital of the Charité, magnetic treatment was forbidden, because "the new system had caused for a long time warm discussions between the best informed men of science!" Urged by repeated petitions, the Academy appointed, in 1825, a second committee to investigate the matter, which finally reported a firm conviction of the genuineness and efficacy of magnetism, and recommended a further examination of this important branch of psychology and natural science. A permanent committee was thereupon directed to take charge of the matter, before which a very large

number of important facts were authenticated; but in 1840, and subsequently, once more, unfavorable reports were laid before the august body and adopted by small majorities.[Pg 379]

In England magnetism met with fierce and violent opposition, the faculty being no little incensed by this new and unexpected competitor for fees and reputation. Dr. Elliotson, a professor in the University of London, and director of a large hospital, had actually to give up his place, because of the hostility engendered by his advocacy of the new doctrine. Afterwards the controversy, though by no means less bitter, was carried on with more courtesy, and the subject received, on the whole, all the attention it deserved. Germany alone has legally sanctioned magnetism as a scientific method within the range of the healing art, and the leading powers, like Prussia, Austria, and Saxony, have admitted its practice in public hospitals. Unfortunately, much deception and imposture appeared from the beginning in company with the numerous genuine cases, and led many eminent men to become skeptics. The Russian government has limited the permission to practice by magnetic cure to "well-informed" physicians; but the Holy Curia, the pope's authority, after admitting magnetism, first as a well-established fact, has subsequently prohibited it by a decree of the Inquisition (21st April, 1841) as conducive to "infidelity and immorality." In spite of all these obstacles, magnetism, in its various branches of somnambulism and clairvoyance, of mesmerism and hypnotism, is universally acknowledged as a valuable doctrine, and has led to the publication of a copious literature.

Magnetizers claim—and not without some show of[Pg 380] reason—that their art was not unknown to antiquity, and is especially referred to in Holy Writ. They rest their claim upon the importance which has from time immemorial been ascribed to the action of the hand as producing visions and imparting the gift of prophecy. When Elisha was called upon to predict the issue of the war against Moab, he sent for a minstrel, "and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the *hand* of the Lord came upon him." (2 Kings iii. 15.) In like manner "the *hand* of the Lord was upon Ezekiel" among the captives by the river of Cheber and he prophesied (Ezekiel i. 3); years after he says again: "The *hand* of the Lord was upon me in the evening" (xxxiii. 22), and once more: "the *hand* of the Lord was upon me" (xl. 1). It is evident that according to biblical usage in these cases the manner of acting attributed to God is described after the usage prevailing among men, and that the "hand upon men" represented the usual method of causing them to fall into a trance. But this placing the hand upon a person was by no means confined to cases of visions; it was employed also in blessings and in sacrifices, in consecrations and miraculous cures. Daniel felt a hand touching him, which "set me upon my knees and the palms of my hands" (Dan. x. 10), while soon after the same hand "strengthened him" (17); and even in the New Testament a high privilege is expressed by the words: "The *hand* of the Lord was with him." (Luke i. 66.) In other cases a finger is substituted for the hand, as when the[Pg 381] magicians of Pharaoh said: "This is the finger of God" (Exodus viii. 19), and the two tables of testimony are said to have been "written with the finger of God" (Exodus xxxi. 18); in the same manner Christ said: "If I with the finger of God cast out devils." (Luke xi. 20.) What makes this reference to finger and hand in Eastern magic and in biblical language peculiarly interesting is the fact that neither Greeks nor Romans ever referred in like manner to such an agency. It is evident that these nations, possessing the ancient wisdom of the East and the revealed knowledge of the chosen people, were alone fully acquainted with the power which the hand of man can exercise under peculiar circumstances, and hence looked upon it in God also, as the instrument by which visions were caused and miracles performed. Hence, no doubt, also the mysterious hand, which from time immemorial has been used as one of the emblems of supreme

power, often called the hand of justice, but evidently emblematic of the "hand of God," which rests upon the monarch who rules "by the grace of God." Magnetizers connect all these uses made of the hand with their own method, which consists almost invariably in certain passes made with the whole hand or with one or more fingers.

Whatever may be thought of this connection between the meaning of the "hand" in biblical language, and the magnetism of our day, there can be no doubt as to the fact that the ancients were already quite familiar with the phenomena which have startled our century as[Pg 382] something entirely new. The so-called temple-sleep of the Greeks was almost identical with modern somnambulism; the only essential difference being that then the gods of Olympus were seen, and lent their assistance, in the place of the saints of the Middle Ages, and the mediums of our own day. Incense, mineral waters, narcotic herbs, and decoctions of Strychnos or Halicacabum, were, according to Pliny, employed to produce the peculiar sleep. ("Hist. Nat." l. xxi. ch. 31.) The patients fell asleep while lying on the skins of recently killed animals in the Temples of Æsculapius, and other beneficent deities, and in their sleep had dreams with revelations prescribing the proper remedies. The priests also, sometimes, dreamt for their visitors—for a consideration—or, at least, interpreted the dreams of others. Even magnetism by touch was perfectly familiar to the ancients, as appears from words of Plautus: "*Quid, si ego illum tractim tangam, ut dormiat?*" (What if I were to touch him at intervals so that he should fall asleep?) Plutarch even speaks of magnetizing by touching with the feet, as practised by Pyrrhus. Other writers discovered that the Sibyls of Rome, as well as the Druids of the Celts, had been nothing more than well-trained somnambulists, and ere long distinct traces of similar practices were found in the annals of the Egyptians also.

One of the earliest cases, which was thoroughly investigated, and carefully watched, is reported by Dr. Pététin, of Lyon, in his famous "Memoir on Catalepsy[Pg 383] and Somnambulism." (Lyon, 1787.) His patient was a lady who had nursed her child with such utter disregard of her own health that her whole system was undermined. After an attack of most violent convulsions, accompanied with apparent madness, she suddenly began to laugh, to utter a number of clever and witty sayings, and finally broke out into beautiful songs; but a terrible cough with hemorrhages ended the crisis. Similar attacks occurred with increasing frequency, during which she could read, with closed eyes, what was placed in her hand, state hour and minute on a watch by merely touching the crystal, and mention the contents of the pockets of bystanders. She stated that she saw these things with varied distinctness; some clearly, others as through a mist, and still others only by a great effort. The reporter expresses his belief that the stomach in this case performed all the functions of the senses, and that the epidermis, with its network of fine nerves, acted in place of the usual organs. Pététin was also the first to enter into direct relations with his somnambulist; he could induce her at will to become clairvoyant, and make himself understood by her whenever he directed his voice toward the only sensitive part. Gradually, however, it was discovered that the degree of close communication (*rapport*) between the two parties depended as largely on the correspondence of character between them as on the energy of will in the magnetizer and the power of imagination possessed by the patient. Deleuse, one of the professors of the[Pg 384] *Jardin des Plantes*, in Paris, gave much attention to the subject, and in his numerous publications maintained the existence of a magnetic fluid by the side of the superior power with which some men are endowed, and that both were employed in influencing others. He was frequently, and violently, attacked on the score of his convictions, especially after several cases of cunning deception had become known. For very soon the innate desire for

notoriety led many persons to pretend somnambulism, and skillfully to imitate the phenomena of clairvoyance, displaying, as is not unfrequently the case, in these efforts a skill and a perseverance which would have secured them great success in any legitimate enterprise. A number of volumes appeared, mostly in Germany, professing to contain accounts of marvelous cures achieved by magnetism, which upon examination proved to be altogether fictitious. France, however, abounded more than any other country with impostors, and every kind of deception and cheating was carried on there, at the beginning of this century, under the cloak of mesmerism. Young girls, stimulated by large rewards, and well trained by hospital surgeons, would submit to brutal treatment, and profess to reveal, during well-simulated trances, infallible remedies for grievous diseases. The followers of Mesmer degraded his art by making it a merry pastime or a lucrative exhibition, without regard to truthfulness, and without reverence for science. Even political intriguers, and financial speculators, availed themselves of the new[Pg 385] discovery; precisely as in our day spirit-rapping and kindred tricks are used. In England, and in the Union, mesmerism fared little better; especially with us, it soon fell into the hands of quacks and charlatans who made it a source of profit; at the same time it assumed various new names, as, electro-biology, hypnotism, and others.

The idea that somnambulism was the effect of angelic or demoniac influences was once largely entertained, but has long since given way to more scientific views. But it cannot be said that the true nature of the active principle has yet been fully ascertained, and so far the results of mesmerism must be classed among magic phenomena. What is alone clearly established is the power which the strong will of the magnetizer evidently exercises over the patient, and the fact that this energy acts through the hands as its organs. The patient, on his side, undergoes by such an exercise of a foreign will a complete change of his individuality; the action of his brain is modified and he falls into magnetic sleep. Many intelligent somnambulists have distinctly stated that they obey the will of their master and not his hands; that manipulation, in fact, merely serves to communicate this will to their inner sense. Whether the connection which evidently exists between the two parties is established merely for moral agencies or by an infinitely subtle fluid, which may possibly be the Od of Baron Reichenbach—this question remains as yet undecided. So much only is quite certain that neither the[Pg 386] will alone suffices to produce the magic phenomena of magnetism, nor heat and electricity, as the physicist Parrot maintained; as little can electro-magnetism, unaided, be the cause of such results, though the great Robiano stoutly asserted its power; man is a dualism of spirit and body, and both must be influenced alike and together, in order to obtain perfect mastery. The most plausible explanation yet offered by men of science is, that by the will of the magnetizer his own nervous and mental system assumes a certain condition which changes that of the subject into one of opposite polarity, paralyzes some of his cerebral functions and causes him to fall into a state resembling sleep. The stronger and healthier man affects the nervous system of a feeble and less healthy man according to his own more or less strongly marked individuality, and the spiritual influence naturally develops itself in the same proportions as the material influence. Hence the thoughts and feelings, the convictions and the faith of the magnetizer are reflected upon the mind of his subject. Even Mesmer himself had not yet reached this point; he was, up to his death, content to ascribe the power of the magnetizer to the waves of an universal fluid set in motion by the superior energy of specially endowed persons. According to his doctrine thoughts were conveyed by means of this mysterious fluid in precisely the same manner in which light and sound are borne onward on the waves of the air that surrounds us. They proceed from the brain and the nerves of one[Pg 387] person and reach those of another person in this imperceptible manner; to dispatch them on their

errand, volition is required; to receive them, willingness and a certain natural predisposition, since there are men incapable of being reached in this way, as there are others who are deprived of sight or hearing. As the conveying fluid is far more subtle than the thinnest air, permeates the whole universe and bears a close resemblance to the fluid which sets our nerves in motion, there is no other limit to the effects of volition on the part of the so-called magnetizer than the strength of his will. If he possesses this in a sufficiently high degree, he can affect those who are subject to his superiority even at the greatest distance. Moreover, if his influence is sufficiently effective the somnambulist acquires new and heretofore unknown powers; he sees the interior of his own body, recognizes its defects and diseases, and by a newly-awakened instinct, perceives what is necessary to restore its perfect order. Such were the views of Mesmer.

Besides this theory a number of others have been published from time to time, by men of science of almost all countries—even modern philosophers, like the German Schopenhauer, having entered the lists in defense of their favorite ideas. The most striking view published in recent times, is found in the works of Count Robiano, a learned abbé and a brilliantly successful magnetizer. He ascribes all the phenomena of somnambulism to the purely physical activity of the nerves, and proposes to[Pg 388] call his new physical science neururgy. He identifies the nervous fluid with galvanism and voltaic electricity, and asserts that by a galvanic battery all the results can be obtained which mesmerism claims as its own. He also states that galvanic rings, bracelets, belts and necklaces cause immediately somnambulism in well-qualified persons, while carbon held before the nostrils of somnambulists in deep sleep, awakes them instantly, and at the same time releases limbs held in cataleptic rigidity. Alabaster, soda, and wax have similar effects, but less promptly, and the wind from a pair of bellows has equal power. According to his theory, currents of what he calls the galvanic-neururgic fluid, are capable of producing all the well-known symptoms and phenomena of thought from idiocy to genius, and from unconscious sleep to the highest excitement; the process by which these results can be obtained is a suspension of the vital equilibrium by disease, intoxication, abstinence, long-continued fasting and prayer and the like. If the marvelous fluid is unequally distributed through the system, catalepsy ensues. The novelty and force of Robiano's doctrines attracted much attention, but a series of experiments conducted by eminent men soon proved that galvanism alone produced in no instance somnambulism, but invariably required the aid of volition, which the learned Italian in his modesty had probably underrated, if not altogether overlooked.

It is a matter more of curiosity than of real interest that the Chinese have—now for nearly eleven hundred[Pg 389] years—believed in an inherent power possessed by every human being, called yu-yang, which is identical with an universal yu-yang. According to this view, every person endowed with the proper ability can dispose of his own yu-yang and diffuse a portion of it over others, so as to cure their infirmities. The French missionary Amyot communicated this to Puységur (*Du Magnétisme Animal*, Paris, 1807, p. 387), and looked upon the yu-yang as the universal vital power which produces everything.

Before we dismiss any such theory—in China or nearer home—with a supercilious smile, it is well to recall the reception which the first revelation of electricity in the human body met among our savants. The doctrine had to pass through the usual three stages of contempt, controversy and final adoption. John Wesley, more than a hundred years ago, said of it: "With what vehemence has it been opposed! Sometimes, by treating it with contempt, as if it were of little or no use; sometimes by arguments such as they were, and sometimes by such cautions against its ill effects, as made thousands afraid to meddle with it." Now, every elementary text-book

teaches that all created living bodies are electric, and that some persons, animals, and plants are so in a very high degree. To establish this truth poor puss has had to suffer much in order to give out electric sparks, and the sensitive plant has had to show how its leaves

"With quick horror fly the neighboring hand,"[Pg 390]

which draws from them the electricity of which it contains more than other plants. Physicians have learnt that a person who has the small-pox cannot be electrified, the body being fully charged and refusing to receive more electricity, while sparks may be drawn from the body of a patient dying with cholera. Now this once despised power, in the shape of voltaic electricity, adorns our tables with electro-plate works of art, carries our thoughts around the globe, blasts rocks, fires cannons and torpedoes, and even rings the bells of our houses. Now little chain batteries, that can be carried in the waistcoat pockets, produce powerful shocks and cure grievous diseases, while tiny bands, which yet can decompose water in a test-tube, are worn by thousands as a protection against intense suffering and utter prostration. What in this case happened to electricity may very well be the fate of the new power also, which is the true agent in all that we carelessly call magnetism.

Somnambulism and clairvoyance, by whatever means they may have been caused, differ in this from dreams and feverish fancies, that the outer senses are rendered inactive and in their place peculiar inner life begins to act, while the subject is perfectly conscious. The magic phenomena differ naturally infinitely according to the varying natures of the patients. In the majority of cases sleep is the only result of magnetizing; a few persons become genuine somnambulists and begin to speak, first very indistinctly, because the organs of speech are partially locked and the consciousness is not fully[Pg 391] aroused. As the spasms cease, speech becomes freer, and as the mind clears up, the thoughts also reveal themselves more distinctly. These symptoms are ordinarily accompanied by others of varying character, from simple heat in the extremities and painful sobbing to actual syncope. In almost all such cases, however, the nervous system is suffering from a violent shock, and this produces spasms of more or less appalling violence. The temper of the sufferers—for such they are all to some degree—varies from deep despondency to exulting blissfulness, but is as changeable as that of children, and resembles but too frequently the capricious and unintelligible mental condition of insane persons.

Those who are for the first time thrown into magnetic sleep generally feel after awaking as if a great change had taken place in them; they are apt to remain serious, and apparently plunged in deep thought for several days. If their case is in unskillful hands, nervous disorders are rarely avoided; phantastic visions may be seen, and convulsions and more threatening symptoms even may occur. Youth is naturally more susceptible to the influence of magnetism than riper years; really old persons have never yet been put to sleep. In like manner women are more easily controlled than men, and hence more capable of being magnetized than of magnetizing others. If men appear more frequently in the annals of this new branch of magic than women, this is due merely to the fact that men appear naturally, and so far at least voluntarily more frequently in public[Pg 392] statements than women. The latter, moreover, are very rarely found able to magnetize men, simply because they are less in the habit of exerting their will for the purpose of influencing others; the exceptions were mostly so-called masculine women. Over their own sex, however, they are easily able to obtain full control.

Among the curious symptoms accompanying the magic phenomena of this class, the following deserve being mentioned. A distinguished physician, Dr. Heller, examined the blood corpuscules of a person in magnetic sleep and found that their shape was essentially modified; they were raised and pointed so as to bear some resemblance to mulberries; at the same time they exhibited a vibrating motion. Another symptom frequently observed in mesmerism are electric shocks, which produce sometimes a violent trembling in the whole person before the beginning of magnetic sleep and after it has ceased. As many as four thousand such shocks have been counted in an hour; they are especially frequent in hysterical women and then accompanied by severe pain, in men they are of rarer occurrence. Finally, it appears from a number of well-authenticated cases that magnetic convulsions are contagious, extending even to animals. Persons suffering with catalepsy have more than once been compelled to kill pet cats because the latter suffered in a similar manner whenever the attacks came, and the same has been noticed in favorite dogs which were left in the room while magnetic cures were performed. This is all the[Pg 393] more frequently noticed as many magnetizers look upon convulsions as efforts made by nature to restore the system to a healthy condition, and hence excite in their patients convulsions without magnetizing them fully.

A new doctrine concerning the magic phenomena of magnetism establishes a special force inherent in all inorganic substances, and calls it Siderian. This theory is the result of the observation that certain substances, like water and metal, possess a special power of producing somnambulism, and at one time a peculiar apparatus, called *baquet*, was much in use, by means of which several persons, connected with each other and with a vessel filled with water and pieces of metal, were rendered clairvoyant. The whole subject has not yet been fully investigated, and hence the conclusions drawn from isolated cases must be looked upon as premature. It has, however, been established beyond doubt that metals have a peculiar power over sensitive persons, in their natural sleep as well as in the magnetic sleep. Many somnambulists are painfully affected by gold, others by iron; a very sensitive patient could, after an instant's touch, distinguish even rare metals like bismuth and cobalt by the sensations which they produced when laid upon her heart. Dr. Brunner, when professor of physics in Peru, had a patient who could not touch iron without falling into convulsions, and was made clairvoyant by simply taking her physician's pocket-knife in her hand.

This Siderian or Astral force, so called from a pre[Pg 394]sumed influence exercised by the heavenly bodies, as well as by all inorganic substances, admits of no isolation, although it is possessed in varying degrees by certain metals and minerals. It has no effect even upon the electrometer or the magnetic needle; its force is radiating, quite independent of light, but considerably increased by heat. Persons magnetized by the mysterious force of the *baquet* have, however, an astonishing power over the magnetic needle and can make it deflect by motion, fixed glance, or even mere volition. In *Galignani's Messenger* (25th of October, 1851) the case of Prudence Bernard in Paris is mentioned, who forced the needle to follow the motions of her head.

Whatever we may think of the value of this theory, it cannot be denied that the effect which certain physical processes going on in the atmosphere have on our body and mind alike is very striking and yet almost entirely unknown. Science is leisurely gathering up facts which will no doubt in the end furnish us a clue to many phenomena which we now call magic, or even supernatural. Thus almost every hour of the day has its peculiarity in connection with Nature: at one hour the barometer, at another the thermometer reaches its maximum; at other periods

magnetism is at its highest or the air fullest of vapor, and to these various influences the diseases of men stand in close relation. When Auroras are seen frequently the atmosphere is found to be surcharged with electricity; they are intimately connected with gastric fevers, and according to some physicians,[Pg 395] even with typhus and cholera. It has also been ascertained that the progress of the cholera and the plague—perhaps also of common influenza—coincides accurately with the isogonic line; these diseases disappear as soon as the eastward declination of the magnetic needle ceases. In recent times a correspondence of the spots in the sun with earth-magnetism has also been observed. In like manner it has been established that continued positive electricity of the air, producing ozone in abundance, is apt to cause catarrhs, inflammations, and rheumatism, while negative electricity causes nervous fevers and cholera. Even the moon has recovered some of its former importance in its relations to the human body, and although the superstitions of past ages with their absurd exaggerations have long since been abandoned, certain facts remain as evidences of a connection between the moon and some diseases. Thus the paroxysms of lunatics, epileptics, and somnambulists are undoubtedly in correspondence with the phases of the moon; madmen rave most furiously when the latter is full, and its phases determine with astonishing regularity the peculiar affections of women, as was triumphantly proven by the journal kept with admirable fidelity during the long life of Dr. Constantine Hering of Philadelphia.

Another name given to these phenomena is the Hypnotism of the English. (Braid, "Neurohypnology," London, 1843.) This theory is based upon the fact that sensitive persons can be rendered clairvoyant by looking[Pg 396] fixedly at some small but bright object held close to their face, and by continuing for some time to fix the mind upon the same object after the eyelids have closed from sheer weariness. The method of producing this magnetic sleep, and some of the symptoms peculiar to mesmerized persons, has since been frequently varied. Dodds makes the patient take a disk of zinc, upon which a small disk of copper is laid, into his hand, and regard them fixedly; thus he produces what he calls electro-biology. Catton, in Manchester, England, prefers a gentle brushing of the forehead, and by this simple means causes magnetic sleep. Braid's experiments, in which invariably over-excitement of nerves was followed by torpor, rigidity, and insensibility, have since been repeated by eminent physicians with a view to produce anæsthesis during painful operations. They have met with perfect success; and the removal of the shining object, fresh air, and slight frictions, sufficed to restore consciousness. The same results have been obtained in France, where, according to a report made to the French Academy, in 1859, by the renowned Dr. Velpeau, persons induced to look at a shining object, held close between their eyes, began to squint violently, and in a few moments to fall, utterly unconscious and insensible, into magnetic sleep. Maury explains the process as one of vertigo, which itself again is caused by the pressure of blood upon the brain, and adds, that any powerful impression produced upon the retina may have the same effect. Hence, no[Pg 397] doubt, the *mal occhio* of the Italians, inherited from the evil eye of the ancients; hence the often almost marvelous power which some men have exercised by the mere glance of the eye. The fixed look of the magnetizer, which attracts the eye of the patient, and holds it, as it were, spell-bound, has very much the same effect, and when this look is carefully cultivated it may put others beside themselves—as was the case with Urbain Graudier, who could, at any time, cause his arms to fall into a trance by merely fixing his eyes upon them for a few minutes.

From all these experiments we gather, once more, that men can, by a variety of means, which are called magnetism or mesmerism, influence others who are susceptible, till the latter fall into

magnetic sleep, have cataleptic attacks, or become clairvoyant. It is less certain that, as many assert, these results are obtained by means of a most subtle, as yet unknown, fluid, which the magnetizer causes to vibrate in his own mind, and which passes from him, by means of his hands, into the patient, where it produces effects corresponding to those felt by the principal. To accomplish even this, it is absolutely necessary that the magnetizer should not only possess a higher energy than his patient, but also stand to him in the relation of the positive pole to the negative. The extent of success is measurable by the strength of will on one hand, and the degree of susceptibility on the other; both may be infinitely varied, from total absence to an overwhelming abundance.[Pg 398] Practice, at least, however, aids the magnetizer effectually, and certain French and Italian masters have obtained surprising results. The most striking of these is still the cataleptic state, which they cause at will. Breathing, pulsation, and digestion continue uninterrupted, but the muscles are no longer subject to our will; they cease to be active, and hence the patient remains immovable in any position he may be forced to assume.

The general symptoms produced by magnetizing are uniformly the same: as soon as a sufficient number of passes have been made from the head downward the patient draws a few deep inhalations, and then follow increased animal heat and perspiration, the effect of greater activity of the nerves, while pain ceases and cheerfulness succeeds despondency. If the passes are continued, these symptoms increase in force, produce their natural consequences, and, the functions becoming normal, recovery takes place. Magnetic sleep is frequently preceded by slight feverishness, convulsive trembling and fainting. The eyelids, half or entirely closed, begin to tremble, the eyeballs turn upward and inward, and the pupils become enlarged and insensible to light. The features change in a striking manner, peculiar to this kind of sleep, and easily recognized. After several experiments of this kind have been made upon susceptible persons, the outward sleep begins to be accompanied by an inner awakening, at first in a half-dreamy state and gradually more fully, till conversation can be attempted.[Pg 399]

Contrary to the general impression, faith does not seem to be an essential element of success, at least on the part of the patient, for infants and very young children have been rendered clairvoyant as well as grown persons. On the other hand, natural susceptibility is indispensable, for Deleuse (*Déf. du Magnétisme*, p. 156) states that in his extended practice he found only one out of twenty persons fit to be magnetized. Of those whom he could influence, only one in twenty could converse in his sleep, and of five of this class not more than one became fully clairvoyant. Certain persons, though well endowed, impress their patients unfavorably, cause a sensation of cold instead of heat in their system, and produce a feeling of strong aversion. The most remarkable feature in all these relations, however, is the fact that the patient not unfrequently affects the magnetizer, and this in the most extraordinary manner. One physician took into the hand with which he had touched a dying person, two finches; they immediately sickened and died a few days later. Another, a physically powerful and perfectly healthy man, who was treating a patient suffering of *tic douloureux* by means of magnetism, became unwell after a few days, and on the seventh day fell himself a victim to that painful disease, till he had to give up the treatment. He handed his patient over to a brother physician, who suffered in the same manner, and actually died in a short time.

After continued practice has strengthened the mag[Pg 400]netizer, his "passes" often become unnecessary, and he can at last, under favorable circumstances, produce magnetic sleep by a simple glance or even the mere unuttered volition. Some physicians had only to say Sleep! and their patient fell asleep; others were able to move the sleepers from their beds by a slight touch

with the tip of the thumb. One of this class, after curing a poor boy of catalepsy, retained such perfect control over him that he only needed to point at him with his finger, or to let him touch some metal which he had magnetized, in order to make him fall down as if thunderstruck. The great German writer, known as Jean Paul, relates of himself that he, "in a large company and by merely looking at her fixedly, caused a Mrs. K. twice to fall almost asleep and to make her heart beat and her color go, till S. had to help her." The Abbé Faria, who seems to have been specially endowed with such power, would magnetize perfect strangers by suddenly stretching out his hands and saying in an authoritative tone: Sleep, I will it! He had a formidable competitor afterwards in Hébert, who played almost at will with a large number of spectators in his crowded hall, making them follow him wherever he led, or causing them to fall asleep by simply making passes over the inside of their hats. In the case of young girls he produced rigidity of members with great facility, and then caused them to assume any position he chose; his patients were utterly helpless and powerless. Dupotet, already mentioned, possessed similar influence[Pg 401] over others; he once magnetized an athletic man of ripe years, by merely walking around the chair on which he was seated, and forced him to turn with him by jerks. On another occasion he made a white chalk-mark on the floor, and then requested a gentleman to put both his feet upon the spot; while he remained quietly standing by the side of his friends. After a few minutes the stranger began to shut his eyes, and his body trembled and swayed to and fro, till it sank so low that the head hung down to the hips—at last Dupotet loosened the spell by upward passes. An Italian, Ragazzoni, excited in 1859, no small sensation by his remarkable success as a magnetizer. Unlike other physicians, he used an abundance of gestures to accompany the active play of his expressive features, and yet by merely breathing upon persons he could check their respiration and the circulation of their blood; in like manner he caused the chest to swell and paralyzed single limbs or the whole body. He pushed needles through the hand or the skin of the forehead without causing a sign of pain; he enabled his patients to guess his thoughts, and set them walking, running or dancing, although they were in one room and he in another. When he had paralyzed their senses, burning sulphur did not affect their smell, nor brilliant light the open pupil; the ringing of a large bell close to the ear and the firing of a pistol remained unheard. In fine, he repeated all the experiments already made by Puységur with his patient, Victor, but generally without the use of passes. (Schopenhauer,[Pg 402] *Ueber d. Willen in d. Natur.* 1867, p. 102.) Maury, who has given a most interesting and trustworthy account of similar cases (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1860, t. 25), states in speaking of General Noizet, that the latter caused him to fall asleep by saying: "*Dormes!*" Immediately a thick veil fell upon his eyes, he felt weak, began to perspire, and felt a strong pressure upon the abdomen. A second experiment, however, was less successful.

Besides passes, a variety of other means have been employed to produce magnetic sleep and kindred phenomena. Dr. Bendsea, one of the earlier practitioners, frequently used metal mirrors or even ordinary looking-glasses; another Dr. Barth, maintained that by touching or irritating any part of the outer skull, the underlying portions of the brains could be excited. By thus pressing upon the organ of love of children, his patients would at once begin to think of children, and often caress a cushion. In this theory he is supported by Haddock, who first discovered that the magnetizer's will could force his patient to substitute his fancies for the reality, and, for instance, to believe a handkerchief to be a pet dog or an infant, and an empty glass to be filled with such liquids as he suggested. The influence in such cases must, however, be rather ascribed to the fact that the magnetizers were also phrenologists, than to the presumed organs themselves.

It must lastly be mentioned that some persons claim to possess the power to magnetize themselves, and Du[Pg 403]potet, a trustworthy authority in such matters, supports the assertion. A case is mentioned in the *Journal de l'âme* (iv. p. 103), of a man who could hypnotize himself from childhood up, by merely fixing his eye for some time upon a certain point; in later years, probably by too frequent excitement of this kind, he was apt to fall into trances and to see visions.

The sympathetic relations which by magnetism are established between two or more persons who are in a state of somnambulism or clairvoyance, is commonly called *rapport*, although there is no apparent necessity for preferring a French word. The closest relations exist naturally between the magnetizer and his subject, and the intensity of the rapport varies, of course, with the energy of will of the one, and the susceptibility of the patient of the other. The same rapport exists, however, often between the patients of the same magnetizer, and may be increased by merely joining hands, or a strong effort of will on the part of the physician. It has often been claimed that mesmerism produces exceptionally by *rapport* what in twins is the effect of a close natural resemblance and contemporaneousness of organization. Clairvoyants endowed with the highest powers which have yet been observed, thus see not only their own body as if it were transparent, but can in like manner watch what is going on within the bodies of others, provided they are brought into *rapport* with them, and hence their ability to prescribe for their ailments. Puységur was probably the first to discover[Pg 404] this peculiarity: he was humming to himself a favorite air while magnetizing a peasant boy, and suddenly the latter began to sing the same air with a loud voice. Haddock's patients gave all the natural signs of pain in different parts of the body, when he was struck or pinched, while at the very time they were themselves insensible to pain. Dr. Emelin found that when he held his watch to his right ear, a female patient of his heard the ticking in her left ear; if he held it to her own ear she heard nothing. He was, also, not a little astonished when another patient, in a distant town to which he traveled, revealed to him a whole series of professional meditations in which he had been plunged during his journey. And yet such a knowledge of the magnetizer's thoughts is nothing uncommon in well-qualified subjects who have been repeatedly magnetized. Mrs. Crowe mentions the case of a gentleman who was thus treated while he was at Malvern and his physician at Cheltenham. He was lying in magnetic sleep, when he suddenly sprang up, clapped his hands together, and broke out into loud laughter. His physician was written to and replied that on the same day he had been busy thinking of his patient, when a sudden knock at the door startled him and made him jump and clap his hands together. He then laughed heartily at his folly! (I. p. 140.) Dupotet once saw a striking illustration of the *rapport* which may exist between two patients of the same magnetizer, even where the two are unknown to each other.[Pg 405]

He was treating some of his patients in a hospital in St. Petersburg, by means of magnetism, and found, to his surprise, that whenever he put one of them to sleep in the upper story, the other in the lower story would also instantly drop asleep, although she could not possibly be aware of what was going on upstairs. This happened, moreover, not once, but repeatedly, and for weeks in succession. If both were asleep when he came on his daily round, he needed only arouse one to hear the other awake with a start and utter loud cries.

Magnetic sleep generally does not begin immediately, but after some intermediate danger; most frequently ordinary sleep serves as a bridge leading to magnetic sleep, and yet the two are entirely different conditions. When at last sleep is induced, various degrees of exceptional powers are exhibited, which are evidences of an inner sense that has been awakened, while the

outer senses have become inactive. The patient is, however, utterly unconscious of the fact that his eyes are closed, and believes he sees through them as when he is awake. When somnambulists are asked why they keep their eyes shut, they answer: "I do not know what you mean; I see you perfectly well." The highest degree, but rarely developed in specially favored persons, consists of perfect clairvoyance accompanied by a sense of indescribable bliss; in this state the spiritual and moral features of the patient assume a form of highest development, visions are beheld, remote and future things are discerned, and other persons may be influenced, even[Pg 406] if they are at a considerable distance. It is in this condition that persons in magnetic sleep exhibit in the highest degree the magic phenomena of magnetism. The latter are generally accompanied by a sensation of intense light, which at times becomes almost painful, and has to be allayed by the physician, especially when it threatens to interfere with the unconscious conversations of the patient. This enjoyment has, however, to be paid for dearly, for it exhausts the sleeper, and in many instances it so closely resembles the struggle of the soul when parting from the body in death, that dissolution seems to be impending. Somnambulists themselves maintain that such magnetic sleep shortens their lives by several years, and has to be interrupted in time to prevent it from becoming fatal. Recollection rarely survives magnetic sleep, but after awaking, vague and indistinct impulses continue, which stand in some connection with the incidents of such sleep. A well known magnetizer, Mouillesaux, once ordered a patient, while sunk in magnetic sleep, to go on the following day and call on a person whom she did not like. The promise was given reluctantly, but not mentioned again after she awoke. To test the matter, the physician went, accompanied by a few friends, on the next day, to that person's house, and, to their great surprise, the patient was seen to walk up and down anxiously before the door, and at last to enter, visibly embarrassed. Mouillesaux at once followed her and explained the matter; she told him that from the moment of her rising in the[Pg 407] morning she had been haunted by the idea that she ought to go to this house, till her nervousness had become so painful as to force her to go on her unwelcome errand. (*Exposé des Cures, etc.*, iii. p. 70.)

The power to perceive things present without the use of the ordinary organs, and to become aware of events happening at a distance, has been frequently ascribed to an additional sense, possibly the Common Sense of Aristotle. Its fainter operations are seen in the almost marvelous power possessed by bats to fly through minute meshes of silk nets, stretched out for the purpose, even when deprived of sight, and to find their way to their nests without a moment's hesitation. Cuvier ascribed this remarkable power to their exquisitely developed sense of touch, which would make them aware of an almost imperceptible pressure of the air; but while this might explain their avoiding walls and trees, it could not well apply to slender silk threads. Another familiar illustration is found in the perfectly amazing ability often possessed by blind, or blind and deaf persons, who distinguish visitors by means neither granted nor known to their more fortunate brethren. It is generally believed that in such cases the missing senses are supplied by a superior development of the remaining senses, but even this assertion has never yet been fully proved, nor if proved, would it supply a key to some of the almost marvelous achievements of blind people.

This new or general sense seems only to awaken in[Pg 408] exceptional cases and under peculiar circumstances. That it never shows itself in healthy life is due to the simple fact that its power is then obscured by the unceasing activity of the ordinary senses. A peculiar, and as yet unexplained feature of this power is the tendency to ascribe its results, not to the ordinary organs, but by a curious transposition to some other part of the body, so that persons in magnetic

sleep believe, as the magnetizer may choose, that they see, or smell, or hear by means of the finger-tips, the pit of the stomach, the forehead, or even the back of the head. It is true that savants like Alfred Maury (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1860, t. 25) and Dr. Michéa ascribe these new powers only to an increased activity of the senses; but nothing is gained by this reasoning, as such an astounding increase of the irritability of the retina or the tympanum is as much of a magic phenomenon as the presumed new sense. The simple explanation is that it is not the eye which sees nor the ear which hears, but that images and sound-waves are carried by these organs to the great nervous centre, where we must look for the true source of all our perceptions. If in magnetic sleep the same images and waves can be conveyed by other means, the result will be precisely the same as if the patient was observing with open eyes and ears.

A lady treated by Despine thus heard with the palm of her hand and read by means of the finger-tips, which she passed rapidly over the letters presented to her in her sleep. At the same time she invariably ascribed[Pg 409] the sensations she experienced to the natural senses; flowers, for instance, laid down unseen by her, so as barely to touch her fingers, caused her to draw in air through the nostrils and to exclaim: Ah, how sweet that is! and if objects were placed against the sole of her foot, she would often exclaim: "What is that? I cannot see it distinctly." Somnambulists can, hence, carry on domestic work in the dark with the same success as in broad daylight, and a patient whose case has been most carefully investigated, could hem the finest linen handkerchiefs by holding the needle to her brow, high above her eyes. Thus persons have seen by means of almost every part of the body, a fact which has led more than one distinguished physiologist to assume that, under special circumstances, all the papillæ of nerves in the epidermis may become capable of conveying the sensual perceptions ordinarily assigned only to certain organs, as the eye or the ear. Even this supposition, however, would not suffice to explain the ability possessed by some magnetized persons to see and hear by means of their fingers, even without touching the objects or when separated from the latter by an intervening wall.

The highest magic phenomena connected with magnetic sleep consist in the perception of hidden things and in the influence exercised over persons at a distance. Only a few of these can be explained by natural laws and by the increased power of the senses frequently granted to peculiarly constituted or diseased[Pg 410] persons. The senses, on the contrary, cease to operate, and man, for a time, becomes endowed with a higher power, which is probably part and portion of his spiritual being, as made after the image of the Most High, but obscured and rendered inoperative by the subjection of the soul to the earthborn body. Nor is this power always under his control; as if to mark its supernatural character, the patient very often perceives what is perfectly indifferent to himself, and is forced, almost against his own will, to witness or foresee events, the bearing of which he cannot discern. Generally, therefore, the importance of these revelations is of less interest than the manner in which they are made, which is invariably of the kind we call magic. This is still further attested by the difficulty, which is almost always felt, of translating them, as it were, into ordinary language, and hence the many allegoric and symbolic forms under which they are made known. Future events are often not seen, but read in a newspaper or heard as recited by strangers; in other cases they are apparently imparted by the spirits of deceased persons. A very frequent form is the impression that the soul leaves the body and, pursuing the track of a person to whom the magnetizer points, with all the fidelity and marvelous accuracy of a well-trained dog, finally reaches him and sees him and his surroundings. Nor is the distance a matter of indifference; like the ordinary senses, this new

sense also seems to have its laws and its limits, and if the task is too heavy and the[Pg 411] distance too great, the perception remains vague and indefinite. Most important of all is the fact that, unlike spiritual visions, magnetism never enables the sleeper to go beyond the limits of our earthly home. On the other hand, time is no more an obstacle than space, and genuine somnambulists have seen past and future events as well as distant scenes. Mistakes, however, occur here as with all our other senses; as healthy persons see amiss or hear amiss, so magnetic sleepers also are not unfrequently mistaken—errors to which they are all the more liable as the impressions received by magic powers have to be translated into the language adapted to ordinary senses.

Among somnambulists of this class Alexis is one of the best known, and has left us an account of many experiments in his *Explication du Sommeil Magnétique*. Alexis was once put into magnetic sleep by a friend of Dr. Mayo, and then ordered to go to Boppard, on the Rhine, and look for him; Alexis, after some hesitation, stated that he had found him, and described—although he had never seen him before—his appearance and dress, not only, but also the state of mind in which he was at that moment, all of which proved afterward to be perfectly correct. Alexis declared that his perceptions varied very much in clearness, and that his power to see friends at a distance depended largely on the affection he felt for them. In all instances his magic powers were far inferior to those of his natural senses, although they never misled him, as[Pg 412] the latter had done occasionally. In the *Bibliothèque du Magnétisme Animal* (vii. p. 146), a remarkable case is reported as attested by undoubted authority. The English consul, Baldwin, was, in 1795, visited by an Italian improvisatore, who happened to have a small medicine-chest with him. In the consul's kitchen was a little Arab, a scullion, who suffered of a harassing cough, and whom his master magnetized in order to cure him. While in his sleep the boy saw the medicine-chest, of which he had known nothing before, and selected among the phials one with sugar of agrimonium, which relieved him of his troubles. The Italian, thereupon, asked also to be magnetized; fell promptly asleep, and wrote in this condition, with closed eyes, a poem praising the art of magnetism. Haddock's famous subject, Emma, actually accomplished once the crucial test of all magic phenomena—she proved the value of magnetism in a question of money. In the year 1849 three notes, amounting to £650, had been deposited in a bank, and disappeared in the most unaccountable manner. One of the clerks confessed, that although he had received them, wrapped them up in paper, and placed them with a parcel of other notes, he had forgotten to enter them regularly in the books. No trace could be discovered; at last the magnetized subject was consulted, and after some little time declared that the notes were lying in a certain room, inserted in a certain panel, which she described so accurately that upon search being instituted the[Pg 413] missing notes were found, and the clerk's character was cleared. Dr. Barth magnetized, in 1846, a lady who was filled with anxiety about her husband in America, from whom she had not heard for a long time. After having been put into magnetic sleep several times, she once exclaimed: "God be thanked, my poor husband is better. I am looking over his shoulder and see him write a letter addressed to me, which will be here in six or seven weeks. He tells me that he has been ill for three months." Two months afterwards she actually received such a letter, in which her husband informed her of his three months' illness, and regretted the pain he had probably caused her by his protracted silence. A young lady, magnetized by Robert Napier in his house in Edinburgh, not only described her parents' house as it appeared at the moment, but also the home of a Miss B., in New South Wales, where she had never been. In the garden of the house she saw a gentleman accompanied by a lady in black, and a dog of light color with dark spots; upon inquiry it appeared that Colonel B., the father of the young lady, had at that time

actually been in the garden with his wife and his dog, although some of the minor details proved to have been incorrect. She also gave a minute and accurate account of the upper stories of Napier's house, where she had never been; but recognizing everything only gradually, and correcting the mistakes which she had at first committed. Thus she spoke of Napier's old aunt as dressed in dark colors; after a[Pg 414] while she exclaimed: "Oh, now I see she is dressed in white!" It appeared afterward that the old lady had been sitting in a deep arm-chair, overshadowed by the back of the chair, the gas-light being behind her; just at that moment, however, Napier's wife had come up, the aunt had leaned forward to speak to her, and thus being brought into the light, had revealed her white night-dress. This case is peculiarly interesting as proving that the perceptions of somnambulists are dependent upon conditions similar to those which govern the ordinary senses. (Colquhoun, p. 626.)

According to such high authorities as Hufeland and others, magnetic sleep enables persons to see the interior of the bodies of others. He himself heard one of his female patients, a woman without any knowledge of anatomy, describe quite accurately the inner structure of the ear, and of certain other parts of the body. (*Ueber Sympathie*, p. 115.) It seems to have been well ascertained that she had never had an opportunity of reading such a description, even if her memory had been retentive enough to enable her to recall and recite what she had thus chanced to read. The clairvoyant Alexis once saw through the clothing of a visitor a scar, and after gazing at it—in his sleep—for a long time, he came to the conclusion that it was the effect of a dog's bite, and finally stated all the facts attending the accident of which the scar was the sole remaining evidence. Even historical predictions made in magnetic sleep are not wanting. The death of a king of Würtemberg was[Pg 415] thus foretold by two somnambulists, who were under medical treatment, and who warned their physicians, well-known and trustworthy practitioners of good standing, of the approaching event. The king's death took place without being preceded by any serious illness, and in the manner minutely predicted by one of the patients; a confirmation which was all the more striking, as the prediction had been made in the presence of a number of distinguished men, among whom were a minister of the kingdom and several divines. Another case is that of the Swedish king, Gustavus Vasa, who was assassinated in 1792, by Ankarström. Accompanied by his physician, he once called, as Count Haga, upon a patient treated by Aubry, a pupil of Mesmer. She recognized him immediately, although plunged in magnetic sleep, told him that he suffered of oppressions of the chest, the effect of a broken arm, and foretold him that his life was in danger and that he would be murdered. The king was deeply impressed, and as his physician expressed doubt and contempt in his face, he desired that the latter should be put *en rapport* with the patient. No sooner was this done than the physician's eyes fell, he sank into magnetic sleep, and when, after some time, he was aroused he left the room in great agitation. (A. Gauthier. *Hist. du Somnamb.*, ii. p. 246.)

An occasional phenomenon of magnetic sleep is the improvement of the language of patients; this appears not only in the case of well-educated persons, whose[Pg 416] diction assumes often a high poetical form, but far more strikingly in unlettered and ignorant patients, who suddenly manifest an unexpected familiarity with the more refined form of their native tongue, and not unfrequently even with idioms of which they have previously had no knowledge whatever. All these different symptoms have been authenticated by numerous and trustworthy witnesses. Humble peasant-women have used the most elegant forms of their native language; travelers have unexpectedly recovered the use of idioms once known to them, but long since forgotten; and, finally, a real gift of languages has unmistakably enabled patients to use idioms with which

they had previously never come in contact. This phenomenon develops itself occasionally into poetical improvisations of considerable merit, and the beautiful music which many hear in magnetic sleep, or just before dying, as if coming from another world, is, in like manner, nothing but a product of their own mental exaltation. Thus persons who spoke merely a local dialect, and were acquainted with no other form of their mother-tongue, when placed in magnetic sleep would speak the best English or German, as if their mind, freed from all fetters, resumed once more the original task of forming the language in accordance with their heightened capacities. Little children, whose education had scarcely begun, have been known to recite verses or to compose speeches, of which they would have been utterly incapable in a healthy state, and of which they had[Pg 417] afterwards no recollection. Macnish mentions a young girl who, when magnetized, always fell back into Welsh, which she had spoken as a child, but long since forgotten, and Lausanne mentions one of his patients, a Creole, who came at the age of five to France, and late in life, when magnetized, spoke no longer French but the miserable patois of her early years. A young tanner in England, also, though utterly uneducated, like the peasant-boy of Puységur, was able in magnetic sleep to speak German. Whenever another person, at such a time, spoke to him in English, his lips began at once to move, and he translated what he heard into fair German verses. (Morin, *Journ. du Magn.* 1854, No. 199.)

It must not be overlooked that the gift of singing and of using poetical language, often of great beauty, is not unfrequently developed in fever-patients also, and in insane persons.

Insensibility to impressions from without is another phenomenon which magnetic sleep has in common with many other conditions. It is produced by anæsthetics like chloroform and ether, by utter exhaustion in consequence of long suffering, as was the case with martyrs and prisoners subjected to torture, and by excessive loss of blood. But in magnetic sleep it reaches a higher degree than under other circumstances; cataleptic patients, and even clairvoyants in moments of greatest excitement, seem to be in a state in which the nerves cease to act as conveyers of impressions to the brain.[Pg 418] This has often led to unwarrantable abuse; physicians, under the pretext of scientific investigation, inflicting severe injuries upon their patients, utterly unmindful of the fact that, however great the momentary insensibility may be, the sense of pain returns at the instant of re-awaking. On the other hand, physicians have taken advantage of this state of unconsciousness of pain, in order to perform serious operations.

The first instance of a surgical operation being attempted while the patient was in mesmeric sleep, was that of Madame Plantin, a lady of sixty-four years, who suffered of cancer in the breast. A Mr. Chapelain prepared her by throwing her for several days into a trance by means of the usual mesmeric passes. She then manifested the ordinary symptoms of somnambulism, and conversed about the impending danger with perfect calmness, while she contemplated it, when conscious, with the utmost horror and apprehension. On the 12th of April, 1824, she was again thrown into a trance, and the painful and dangerous operation accomplished in less than a quarter of an hour, while she conversed with the surgeon, the famous Dr. Ploquet, and showed in her voice, her breathing, and her pulse not the slightest sign of excitement or pain. When the wound was bound up, she awoke, but upon hearing what had taken place, she became so violently excited that the magnetizer had to cause her once more to fall asleep under his passes. And yet, in spite of this brilliant success, when Dr. Warren of Boston asked the great surgeon[Pg 419] why he had never repeated the experiment, the latter was forced to acknowledge that he had not dared do it, "because the prejudice against mesmerism was so strong in Paris that a repetition would have imperiled his position and his reputation!"

Since that time mesmerism has been repeatedly, and almost always successfully employed as an anæsthetic; Dr. James Esdall, chief surgeon of the presidency of Calcutta, having reduced the application to a regular method. Dr. Forbes reports two cases of amputation of the thigh in magnetic sleep, which were successful, and similar experiments have been made in England, and in India, with the same happy result.

It is probably a feature connected with this insensibility that persons in magnetic sleep can with impunity take unusually large doses of medicine, which they prescribe for themselves. For magnetic sleep seems to develop, as we have stated, among other magic phenomena, a peculiar insight also, into diseases and their remedies. Although diseases may assume a variety of deceptive forms, the predictions made by magnetic patients, many months in advance, seldom fail to be verified. This is a mere matter of instinct, for ignorant persons and young children possess the gift in equal degree with the best-informed and most experienced patients. The remedies are almost exclusively so-called simples—a hint of some value to physicians—but always prescribed with much judgment, and in a manner evincing rare medical tact. The dose, however, is[Pg 420] generally twice or three times as much as is ordinarily given. Magnetic patients prescribe as successfully for others, with whom they are placed *en rapport*, as for themselves, since a state of perfect clairvoyance enables them to judge of other persons also with perfect accuracy. One of the most remarkable cases is mentioned by Schopenhauer. ("Parerga," etc., I. p. 246.) A consumptive patient in Russia directed, in her magnetic sleep, the attending physician to put her for nine days into a state of syncope. He did so reluctantly, but during this time her system seemed to enjoy perfect rest, and by this means she recovered. Haddock, also, cured several persons at a distance, by following the directions given to him by a patient of his in her magnetic sleep; he handed her a lock of hair, or a few written lines, which sufficed to put her *en rapport* with the absent sufferers.

Among the magic phenomena observed in magnetic sleep we must lastly mention ecstatic elevation in the air, the giving out of peculiar sounds, and the power to produce extraordinary effects at a distance. Even common somnambulists, it is well known, seem not to be in the same degree subject to the laws of gravity as persons in a state of wakefulness: hence their amazing exploits in walking on roofs, gliding along narrow cornices, or even running up perpendicular walls. Persons in magnetic sleep have been known to float on fresh water as well as in the sea, although they were unable to swim, and sank, if they went into the water when awake. Dupotel saw one of his patients running[Pg 421] along the side of his room on a small strip of wood which was merely tacked on to the wall, and could not have supported a small weight. This peculiar power is all the more fully authenticated as persons have fallen from great heights, while in magnetic sleep, without suffering any injury; but if they are aroused, and then fall, they invariably become subject again to the natural laws, and are often killed. This temporary suspension of the law of gravity has been compared with similar phenomena in science. Thus it is well known that a galvanic stream passing through coils of copper wire will hold an iron needle suspended within the coils; and an iron ball dropped into a glass tube between two powerful magnets will in the same manner remain hanging free in the air. The advocates of this theory reason that if magnetism can suspend the law of gravity in metals, it is at least possible that it may have a similar power in the human body. It has, besides, been observed that certain affections, such as violent nervous fevers, increase the weight of sufferers considerably, while a state of trance diminishes it even more strikingly.

With regard to the magic phenomena of increased intelligence, Abercrombie mentions the case of a girl who as a child had heard a relative play the violin with a certain degree of mastery. Later in life she became his patient, and in her magnetic sleep repeated unconsciously some of the pieces in tones very pleasing and closely resembling the notes of a violin. Each parox[Pg 422]ysm, however, was succeeded by certain symptoms of her disease. Some years afterwards she imitated in like manner the sounds of a piano and the tones of several members of the family who were fond of singing, in such a manner that each voice could be readily and distinctly recognized. Another year passed, and she conversed with a younger companion, whom she fancied she was instructing on topics of political and religious interest, with surprising ability and a frequent display of wit. Henceforth she led two different kinds of life; when awake she was stupid, awkward in her movements, and unable to appreciate music; in her sleep she became clever and showed amazing information and great musical talents. At a critical point in her life, when she was twenty-one years old, a complete change took place in the poor girl; her conversation in her magnetic sleep lost all its attractions; she mixed with it improper remarks, and a few months later she had to be sent to an insane asylum.

It is only within the present generation that the power possessed by some men to magnetize animals has been revived, although it was no doubt fully known to the ancients, and may in part explain the taming of venomous serpents in the East. The most remarkable case is probably that of Mr. Jan, director of the Zoological Gardens at Milan, who "charms" serpents and lizards. In the year 1858 he was requested by a learned visitor, Professor Eversmann, to allow him to witness some experiments; he at once seized a lizard (L. viri[Pg 423]dis) behind the head and looked at it fixedly for a few moments; the animal lay quiet, then became rigid, and remained in any position which he chose to make it assume. Upon making a few passes with his forefinger it closed its eyes at his command. Mr. Jan discovered his gift accidentally one day when a whole bagful of lizards (L. ocellata) had escaped from him, and he forced them by his will and his eye, to return to his keeping. (*Der Zoolog. Garten.* Frankfort, 1861, p. 58.) A Frenchman, Treseau, exercised the same power over birds, which he exhibited in 1860 in Paris. He magnetized them with his hand and his breath, but as nine-tenths of the poor creatures died before they became inured to such treatment, no advantage could be derived from his talent. (Des Mousseaux, p. 310.) A countryman of his, Jacques Pelissier, is reported by the same authority to have been able to magnetize not only birds, which allowed themselves to be taken from the trees, but even hares, so that they remained sitting in their forms and were seized with the hand (p. 302).

SOMNAMBULISM.

It is well known that somnambulism, in the ordinary sense of the word, designates the state of persons who suffer from an affection which disturbs their sleep and causes them to perform strange or ordinary actions, as it may happen, in a state in which they are apparently half awake and half asleep. This disease is already mentioned in the most ancient authors, and its symp[Pg 424]toms are correctly reported in Aristotle. (*De Gener. Anim.*) He states that the sufferers rise in their sleep, walk about and converse, that they distinguish objects as if they were awake, ascend trees, pursue enemies, perform tasks, and then quietly return to bed. The state of somnambulism seems to be intermediate between ordinary dreaming and magnetic clairvoyance, and is probably the effect of a serious disturbance in our physical life, which causes the brain to act in an unusual and abnormal manner. It has always been observed at night only, and most frequently at full

moon, since the moon seems to affect somnambulists not merely by her light, but in each of the different phases in a peculiar manner. The immediate causes of night-walking are often most trivial; as Muratori, for instance, tells us of a priest who became a somnambulist whenever he neglected for more than two months to have his hair cut! Richard (*Théorie des Songes*, p. 288) mentions an analogous case of an old woman whom he knew to be subject to the same penalty.

While nightmares oppress us and make apparently all motion impossible, somnambulism, on the contrary, produces a peculiar facility of locomotion and an irresistible impulse to mount eminences, favored either by an actual diminution of specific gravity, or by an increase of power. This tendency lies again half-way between the sensation of flying, which is quite common in dreams, and the actual elevation from the ground and suspension in the air, which occur in extreme[Pg 425] cases of ecstasy. The senses remain during night-walking in a state of semi-activity; the somnambulist may appear as if fast asleep, seeing and hearing nothing, so that the loudest noises and even violent shaking do not rouse him; or he may, like a dreamer, be partly under the influence of outward impressions. One will rise at night, go to the stable, saddle his horse and ride into the woods, while another mounts the window-ledge and performs all the motions of a man on horseback. Many move with unfailing certainty on perilous paths, and find their way in deepest darkness; others make blunders and fall, as Professor J. Feller did, who mistook an open window for a door. By what means they perceive the nature of their surroundings, is still unexplained; it may be the action of the ordinary senses, although these seem to be closed, or they may possess those exceptional faculties which constitute the magic phenomena connected with somnambulism. Thus Forbes (*Brit. and For. Med. Rev.*, 1846) ascribes their power to an increased sensitiveness of the retina, and mentions the case of Dr. Curry, who suffered from this symptom to such a degree that he distinguished every object in a completely darkened room with perfect ease. In somnambulists, however, the eyes are generally closed or violently turned up; and in the rare cases in which they are open, they evidently see nothing. It is, besides, well established that people thus affected have continued to read, to play on instruments, and even to write after they had fallen sound[Pg 426] asleep, and without ever opening their eyes. The sensitiveness of the retina could here not avail much. A case is mentioned of a father who rose at night, took his child from the cradle, and with wide open eyes carried it up and down the room, seeing nothing, and in such a state of utter unconsciousness that his wife, walking by his side, could safely draw all his secrets from him without his becoming aware of the process or remembering it the next morning. At the age of forty-five he ceased to walk in his sleep, but, instead, had prophetic dreams which revealed to him the occurrences of the following day and later future events. (*Heer*, *Observ.*) Gassendi (*Phys.*, l. viii. ch. 8) mentions a young man, living in Provence, who rose in his sleep, dressed, drew wine in the cellar, wrote up the accounts, and in the darkest night never touched objects that were in his way. If he returned quietly to his bed, he slept well, and strangely enough, recalled everything he had done in the night; but if he was suddenly aroused in the cellar or in the street, he was seized with violent trembling and palpitations of the heart. At times he saw but imperfectly; then he fancied he had risen before daybreak, and lit a lamp. The *Encyclopédie Méthodique* reports the case of a young priest who wrote his sermons at night, and with closed eyes, and then read each page aloud, correcting and improving what he had written. A sheet of paper held between his eyes and his manuscript did not disturb him; nor did he become aware of it if the latter[Pg 427] was removed and blank paper was substituted; in this case he wrote the corrections precisely where they would have been inserted in the text. Macnish mentions ("On Sleep," p. 148) the curious case of an innkeeper in Germany, a huge mass of flesh, who fell asleep at all times and

in all places, but who, when this happened while he was playing cards, nevertheless continued to follow suit, as if he could see what was led. In 1832, when he was barely 50 years old, he literally fell asleep, paralysis killing him instantly during one of these attacks of sleep. The same author mentions somnambulists who in their sleep walked to the sea-shore and swam for some distance without being waked, and the case of a Norwegian who during his paroxysms took a boat and rowed himself about for some time. He was cured of his affection by a tub full of water, which was so placed that he had to step into it when leaving his bed. In Scotland a peasant discovered from below the nest of a sea-mew, which hung at an inaccessible height upon a steep rock; some weeks afterwards he rose in his sleep, and to the horror of his friends, who watched him from below, climbed to the place, took the birds, and safely returned to his cabin. In former ages somnambulists were reported to have even committed murder in their sleep; a Parisian thus rose, dressed himself, swam across the Seine, killed his enemy, and returned the same way without ever awaking; and an Englishman also is reported to have murdered a boy, in a state of unconsciousness, while labor[Pg 428]ing under this affection. Modern science, however, knows nothing of such extreme cases, and the plea has not yet been used by astute lawyers.

Simple somnambulism is not unfrequently connected with magnetic somnambulism, and may occasionally be seen even in trances during daytime. In such cases persons who walk in their sleep may be questioned by bystanders, and in their answers prove themselves not unfrequently able to foretell future events, or to state what is occurring at a distance; or they perform tasks in their sleep which they would not be able to accomplish when awake; they compose music, write poetry, and read works in foreign languages, without possessing the requisite knowledge and training. A poor basket-weaver in Germany once heard a sermon which moved him deeply; several weeks later he rose at night, and repeated the whole sermon from beginning to end; his wife tried in vain to rouse him, and the next morning he knew nothing of what had happened. Cases of scholars who, sorely puzzled by difficult problems, gave them up before retiring, and then, in the night, rose in a state of somnambulism, and solved them easily, are by no means uncommon.[Pg 429]

IX.

MIRACULOUS CURES.

"Spiritus in nobis qui viget, illa facit."—

CORN. AGRIPPA, Ep. xiv.

The uniform and indispensable condition of all miraculous cures, whether produced by prayer, imposition of hands, penitential castigation, or magic power, is faith. Physician and patient alike must believe that disease is the consequence of sin, and accept the literal meaning of the Saviour's words, when he had cured the impotent man near the pool called Bethesda, and said: "Behold, thou art made whole: *sin* no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (St. John v. 14.)

Like their great teacher, all the apostles and saints of the church have ever insisted upon repentance in the heart before health in body could be accorded. It is interesting to notice, moreover, that all Oriental sages, the Kabbalists and later Theosophists, have, without exception, adopted the same view, however widely they may have differed on other points. In one feature only some disagreed: they ascribed to evil spirits what others attributed to sin; but the difference is only nominal, for men, by sin, enter into communion with evil spirits, and become subject to their power. Hence the woman "which had a *spirit* of infirmity eighteen years" was[Pg 430] said to have been "bound by Satan," and when she was healed she was "loosed from the bond." (Luke xiii. 16.)

To this common faith must be added on the part of the physician an energetic will, and in the patient an excited imagination. The history of all ages teaches, beyond the possibility of doubt, that where these elements are present results have been obtained which excite the marvel of men by their astonishing promptness, and their apparent impossibility. They seem generally to be the result of certain symbolic but extremely simple acts, such as the imposition of hands—which may possibly produce a concentration of power—the utterance of a blessing, or merely a continued, fixed glance. The main point, however, is, of course, the psychical energy which is here made available by a process as yet unknown. Prayer is probably the simplest agency, since it naturally encourages and elevates the innermost heart of man, and fills him with that perfect hope and confidence which are necessary for his recovery. This hope is, in the case of miraculous cures performed at the shrines of saints, materially strengthened by the collective force of all preceding cures, which tradition has brought to bear upon the mind, while the senses are powerfully impressed, at the same time, by the surroundings, and especially the votive offerings testifying to the reality of former miracles. In the case of relics, where the Church sees simply miracles, many men believe in a continuing[Pg 431] magic power perceptible only to very sensitive patients; thus the great theologian, Tholuk, ascribes to the "handkerchiefs or aprons" which were brought from the body of St. Paul, and drove away diseases and evil spirits (Acts xix. 12), a special curative power with which they were impregnated. (*Verm. Schriften*, I. p. 80.) At certain times, when the mind of a whole people is excited, and hence peculiarly predisposed to meet powerful impressions from specially gifted and highly privileged persons, such miraculous cures are, of course, most numerous and most striking. This was the case, for instance, in the first days of Christianity, at the time of the Reformation, and during the years which saw the Order of Jesuits established. There is little to be gained, therefore, by confining the era of such phenomena to a certain period—to the days of the apostles, when alone genuine miracles were performed, as many divines believe, or to the first three centuries after Christ, during which Tholuk and others still see magic performances. Magnetic and miraculous cures differ not in their nature, but only in their first cause, precisely as the trance of somnambulists is identical with the trance of religious enthusiasts. The difference lies only in the faith which performs the cure; if it is purely human, the effect will be only partial, and in most cases ephemeral; if divine faith and the highest power co-operate, as in genuine miracles, the effect is instantaneous and permanent. Hence the contrast between the man who at the Lord's bidding "took up his[Pg 432] bed and walked" and the countless cripples who have thrown aside their crutches at the graves of saints, only to resume them a day or two afterward, when, with the excitement, the newly acquired power also had disappeared. But hence, also, the resemblance between many acts of the early Jesuit Fathers and those of the apostles; the intense energy of the former, supported by pure and unwavering faith, produced results which were to all intents and purposes miraculous. With the death of men like St. Xavier, and the rise of worldly ambition in

the hearts of the Fathers, this power disappeared, and modern miracles have become a snare and a delusion to simple-minded believers.

The faith in such psychical power possessed by a few privileged persons is as old as the world. Pythagoras performed cures by enchantment; Ælius Aristides, who had consulted learned physicians for ten years in vain, and Marcus Antoninus, were both cured by incubation. Tacitus tells us that the Emperor Vespasian restored a blind man's sight by moistening his eye with saliva, and to a lame man the use of his feet by treading hard upon him. (Hist. l. iv. c. 8.) Both cures were performed before an immense crowd in Alexandria, and in both cases the petitioners had themselves indicated the means by which they were to be restored, the emperor yielding only very reluctantly to their prayers and the urgent requests of his courtiers. (Sueton., *Vita Vespas.*) Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, had cured colic and diseases of the kidneys by placing the patient on his back and touch[Pg 433]ing him with his big toe (Plutarch, *Vita Pyrrhi*); and hence Vespasian and Hadrian both used the same method!

The imposition of hands, for the purpose of performing miraculous cures, has been practised from time immemorial; Chaldees and Brahmins alike using it in cases of malignant diseases. The kings of England and of France, and even the counts of Hapsburg in Germany, have ever been reputed to be able to cure goîtres by the touch of their hands, and hence the complaint was called the "king's evil." The idea seems to have originated in the high north; King Olave, the saint, being reported by Snorre Sturleson as having performed the ceremony. From thence, no doubt, it was carried to England, where Edward the Confessor seems to have been the first to cure goîtres. In France each monarch upon ascending the throne received at the consecration the secret of the *modus operandi* and the sacred formula—for here also the spoken word went hand in hand with the magic touch. Philip I. was the first and Charles I. the last monarch who performed the cure publicly, uttering the ancient phrase: "*Le roi te touche, Dieu te guérisse!*" In a somewhat similar manner the Saludadores and Ensalmadores of Spain cured, not goîtres and stammering only, as the monarchs we have mentioned, but almost all the ills to which human flesh is heir, by imposition of hands, fervent prayer and breathing upon the patient.

Similar gifts are ascribed to Eastern potentates, and[Pg 434] the ruling dynasty in Persia claims to have inherited the power of healing the sick from an early ancestor, the holy Sheik Sephy. The great traveler Chardin saw patients hardly able to crawl dragging themselves to the feet of the Shah, and beseeching him only to dip the end of his finger into a bowl of water, and thus to bestow upon it healing power. It will excite little wonder to learn that those remarkable men who succeeded by the fire of their eloquence and the power of contagious enthusiasm to array one world in arms against another, the authors of the Crusades, should have been able to perform miraculous cures. Peter of Amiens and Bernard of Clairvaux obtained such a hold on the minds of faithful believers, that their curse produced spasms and fearful sufferings in the guilty, while their blessing restored speech to the dumb, and health to the sick. Here also special power was attributed even to their clothes, and many remarkable results were obtained by the mere touch. Spain, the home of fervent ascetic faith, abounds in saints who performed miracles, the most successful of whom was probably Raimundus Normatus (so called because not born of woman, but cut from his dead mother's body by skillful physicians), who cured, during the plague of 1200, great numbers of men by the sign of the cross. To this class of men belong also, as mentioned before, the early fathers of the Society of Jesus, though their powers were as different as their characters. Ignatius Loyola, who represented the intelligence of the new order, performed few mirac[Pg 435]ulous cures; Xavier, on the contrary, the man of brilliant fancy, was

successful in a great variety of cases. The first leaders, like Loinez, Salmeron and Bobadilla, had no magic power at all, but later successors, like Ochioa Carrera and Kepel, displayed it in a surprising degree, although Ochioa's gifts were distinctly limited to the healing of the sick by the imposition of hands. The whole period of this intense excitement extended only over sixteen years, from 1540 to 1556, after which the vivid faith, which had alone made the cures possible, disappeared. It is worth mentioning that the Jesuits themselves and most of their historians deny that they ever had power to perform miracles, and ascribe the cures to the faith of the patients alone. St. Xavier, it is well known, brought the dead to life again, and even if we assume that they lay only in syncope and had not yet really died, the recovery is scarcely less striking. The most remarkable of these cases is that of an only daughter of a Japanese nobleman. Her death stunned the father, a great lord possessed of immense wealth, to such a degree that his friends feared for his reason; at last they urged him to apply to the great missionary for help. He did so; the Jesuit, filled with compassion, asked a brother priest to join him in prayer, and both fell upon their knees and prayed with great fervor. Xavier returned to the pagan with joyous face and bade him take comfort, as his daughter was alive and well. The nobleman, very unlike the father in Holy Writ, was indignant, thinking that the holy man[Pg 436] either did not believe his child had died or refused to assist him; but as he went home, a page came running up to meet him, bringing the welcome message that his daughter was really alive and well. She told him after his return, that her soul upon leaving the body had been seized by hideous shapes and dragged towards an enormous fire, but that suddenly two excellent men had interposed, rescuing her from their hands, and leading her back to life. The happy father immediately returned with her to the holy man, and as soon as his child beheld Xavier and his companion, she fell down at their feet and declared that they were the friends who had brought her back from the lower world. Shortly afterwards the father and his whole family became Christians. (Orlandini, Hist. Soc. Jesu., ix. c. 213.) The case seems to be very simple, and is one of the most instructive of modern magic. The girl was not dead, but lay in a cataleptic trance, in which she had visions of fearful scenes, and transformed the fierce hold which the disease had on her body into the grasp of hostile powers trying to obtain possession of her soul. At the same time she became clairvoyant, and thus saw Xavier and his companion distinctly enough to recognize them afterwards. The cure was accomplished by the Almighty in answer to the fervent prayer of two pious men filled with pure faith, according to the sacred promise: "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." All the more is it to be regretted that even in those days of genuine piety and rapturous[Pg 437] faith, foreign elements should at once have been mixed up with the true doctrine; for already Caspar Bersaeus ascribed some of his cures to the Holy Virgin; and soon the power passed away, when the honor was no longer given to Him to whom alone it was due.

From that day the power to perform miraculous cures has been but rarely and exceptionably granted to a few individuals. Thus Matthias Will, a German divine of the seventeenth century, was as famous for his marvelous power over the sick and the possessed as for his fervent piety, his incessant praying and fasting, and his utter self-abnegation. Sufferers were brought to him from every part of Christendom, and hundreds who had been given up by their physicians were healed by his earnest prayers and the blessing he invoked from on high. His memory still survives in his home, and an inscription on his tombstone records his extraordinary powers. (Cath. Encycl., Suppl. I. 1320.) Even the Jansenists, with all their hostility to certain usages of the Church, had their famous Abbé Paris, whose grave in the Cemetery of St. Médard became in 1727 the scene of a number of miraculous cures, fully attested by legal evidence and amply described by Montgéron, a man whom the Abbé had in his lifetime changed from a reckless

profligate into a truly pious Christian. (*La vérité des miracles*, etc., Paris, 1737.) The magic phenomena exhibited on this occasion were widely discussed and great numbers of books and pamphlets written for and against their genuineness, until the subject be[Pg 438]came so obscured by party spirit that it is extremely difficult, in our day, to separate the truth from its large admixture of unreliable statements. A peculiar feature of these scenes—admitted in its full extent by adversaries even—was the perfect insensibility of most of the enthusiasts, the so-called *Convulsionnaires*. Jansenists by conviction, these men, calm and cool in their ordinary pursuits, had been so wrought up by religious excitement that they fell, twenty or more at a time, into violent convulsions and demanded to be beaten with huge iron-shod clubs in order to be relieved of an unbearable pressure upon the abdomen. They endured, in this manner, blows inflicted upon the pit of the stomach which under ordinary circumstances would have caused grievous if not fatal consequences.

The above-mentioned witness, who saw their almost incredible sufferings, Carré de Montgéron, states that he himself used an iron club ending in a ball and weighing from twenty to thirty pounds. One of the female enthusiasts complained that the ordinary blows were not sufficient to give her relief, whereupon he beat her sixty times with all his strength. But this also was unavailing, and a large and more powerful man who was standing near had to take the fearful instrument and with his strong arms gave her a hundred additional blows! The tension of her muscles must have been most extraordinary, for she not only bore the blows, which would have killed a strong person in natural health, but the wall against which she was leaning[Pg 439] actually began to tremble and totter from the violent concussion. Nor were the blows simply resisted by the turgescence of the body; the skin itself seemed to have been modified in a manner unknown in a state of health. Thus one of the brothers Marion felt nothing of thrusts made by a sharp-pointed knife against his abdomen and the skin was in no instance injured. To do this the trance in which he lay must necessarily have induced an entire change of the organic atoms, and this is one of the most important magic phenomena connected with this class of visions, which will be discussed in another place.

It is well known that the cures performed at the grave of the Abbé Paris and the terrible scenes enacted there by these *convulsionnaires* excited so much attention that at last the king saw himself compelled to put a stop to the proceedings. After a careful investigation of the whole matter by men specially appointed for the purpose, the grounds were guarded, access was prohibited, and the wags of Paris placed at the entrance the following announcement:

"*Défense de par le Roy. Défense à Dieu,De faire miracle en ce lieu!*"

Ireland had in the seventeenth century her Greatrakes, who, according to unimpeachable testimony, cured nearly every disease known to man, by his simple touch—and fervent prayer.

Valentine Greatrakes, of Waterford, in Ireland, had dreamt, in 1662, that he possessed the gift to cure [Pg 440]goîtres by simple imposition of hands, after the manner of the kings of England and of France. It was, however, only when the dream was several times repeated that he heeded it and tried his power on his wife. The success he met with in his first effort encouraged him to attempt other cases also, and soon his fame spread so far that he was sent for to come to London and perform some cures at Whitehall. He was invariably successful, but had much to endure from the sneers of the courtiers, as he insisted upon curing animals as well as men. His cures were attested by men of high authority, such as John Glanville, chaplain to Charles II., Bishop

Rust, of Dromor, in Ireland, several physicians of great eminence, and the famous Robert Boyle, the president of the Royal Society. According to their uniform testimony Greatrakes was a simple-hearted, pious man, as far from imposture as from pretension, who firmly believed that God had entrusted to him a special power, and succeeded in impressing others with the same conviction. His method was extremely simple: he placed his hands upon the affected part, or rubbed it gently for some time, whereupon the pains, swellings, or ulcers which he wished to cure, first subsided and then disappeared entirely. It is very remarkable that here also all seemed to depend on the nature of the faith of the patient, for according to the measure of faith held by the latter the cure would be either almost instantaneous or less prompt, and in some cases requiring several days and many interviews. He was frequently accused of prac[Pg 441]tising sorcery and witchcraft, but the doctors Faiselow and Artetius, as well as Boyle, defended him with great energy, while testifying to the reality of his cures.

One of the best authenticated, though isolated, cases of this class is the recovery of a niece of Blaise Pascal, a girl eleven years old. She was at boarding-school at the famous Port Royal and suffered of a terrible fistula in the eye, which had caused her great pain for three years and threatened to destroy the bones of her face. When her physicians proposed to her to undergo a very painful operation by means of a red-hot iron, some Jansenists suggested that she should first be specially prayed for, while at the same time the affected place was touched with a thorn reported to have formed part of the crown of thorns of our Saviour. This was done, and on the following day the swelling and inflammation had disappeared, and the eye recovered. The young girl was officially examined by a commission consisting of the king's own physician, Dr. Felix, and three distinguished surgeons; but they reported that neither art nor nature had accomplished the cure and that it was exclusively to be ascribed to the direct interposition of the Almighty. The young lady lived for twenty-five years longer and never had a return of her affection. Racine described the case at full length, and so did Arnauld and Pascal, all affirming the genuineness of the miraculous cure.

During the latter part of the last century a Father Gassner created a very great sensation in Germany by[Pg 442] means of his marvelous cures and occasional exorcisms of evil spirits. He did not employ for the latter purpose the usual ritual of the Catholic Church, but simple imposition of hands and invocation of the Saviour. Nearly all the patients who were brought to him he declared to be under the influence of evil spirits, and divided them into three classes: *circumsessi*, who were only at times attacked, *obsessi*, or bewitched, and *possessi*, who were really possessed. When a sick person was brought to him, he first ordered the evil spirit to show himself and to display all his powers; then he prayed fervently and commanded the demon, in the name of the Saviour, to leave his victim. A plain, unpretending man of nearly fifty years, he appeared dressed in a red stole after the fashion prevailing at that time in his native land, and wore a cross containing a particle of the holy cross suspended from a silver chain around his neck. The patient was placed before him so that the light from the nearest window fell fully upon his features, and the bystanders, who always crowded the room, could easily watch all the proceedings. Frequently, he would put his stole upon the sufferers' head, seize their brow and neck with outstretched hands, and holding them firmly, utter in a low voice a fervent prayer. Then, after having given them his cross to kiss, if they were Catholics, he dismissed them with some plain directions as to treatment and an earnest admonition to remain steadfast in faith. Probably the most trustworthy account of this remarkable man and his truly[Pg 443] miraculous cures was published by a learned and eminent physician, a Dr. Schisel, who called upon the

priest with the open avowal that he came as a skeptic, to watch his proceedings and examine his method. He became so well convinced of Father Gassner's powers that he placed himself in his hands as a patient, was cured of gout in an aggravated form, and excited the utmost indignation of his professional brethren by candidly avowing his conviction of the sincerity of the priest and the genuineness of his cures.

There was, however, one circumstance connected with the exceptional power of this priest, which was even more striking than his cures. His will was so marvelously energetic and his control over weaker minds so perfect that he could at pleasure cause the pulse of his patients to slacken or to hasten, to make them laugh or cry, sleep or wake, to see visions, and even to have epileptic attacks. As may be expected, the majority of his visitors were women and children, but these were literally helpless instruments in his hands. They not only moved and acted, but even felt and thought as he bade them do, and in many cases they were enabled to speak languages while under his influence of which they were ignorant before and after. At Ratisbon a committee consisting of two physicians and two priests was directed to examine the priest and his cures; a professor of anatomy carefully watched the pulse and the nerves of the patients which were selected at haphazard, and all confirmed the statements made[Pg 444] before; while three other professors, who had volunteered to aid in the investigation, concurred with him in the conviction that there was neither collusion nor imposition to be suspected. The priest, who employed no other means but prayer and the invocation of God by the patients, was declared to be acting in good faith, from pure motives, and for the best purposes; his cures were considered genuine. There was, however, in Father Gassner's case also an admixture of objectionable elements which must not be overlooked. The desire for notoriety, which enters largely into all such displays of extraordinary powers, led many persons who were perfectly sound to pretend illness, merely for the purpose of becoming, when cured, objects of public wonder. On the other hand, the good father himself was, no doubt, by his own unexpected success, led to go farther than he would otherwise have done in his simplicity and candor. He formed a complete theory of his own to explain the miracles. According to his view the first cause of all such diseases as had their origin in "possession," were the "principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places," which the apostle mentions as enemies more formidable than "flesh and blood." (Ephes. vi. 12.) These, he believed, dwelt in the air, and by disturbing the atmosphere with evil intent, produced illness in the system and delusions in the mind. If a number combined, and with the permission of the Almighty poisoned the air to a large extent, contagious diseases[Pg 445] followed as a natural consequence. Against these demons or "wiles of the devil" (Ephes. vi. 11), he employed the only means sanctioned by Holy Writ—fervent prayer, and this, of course, could have no effect unless the patient fully shared his faith. This faith, again, he was enabled to awaken and to strengthen by the supreme energy of his will, but of course not in all cases; where his prayer failed to have the desired effect he ascribed the disease to a direct dispensation from on high, and not to the agency of evil spirits, or he declared the patient to be wanting in faith. In like manner he explained relapses as the effects of waning faith. The startling phenomena, however, which he thought it necessary to call forth in his patients, before he attempted their restoration, belong to what must be called the magic of our day. For these symptoms bore no relation to the affection under which they suffered. Persons afflicted with sore wounds, stiffened limbs, or sightless eyes, would, at his bidding, fall into frightful paroxysms, during which the breathing intermitted, the nose became pointed, the eyes insensible to the touch, and the whole body rigid and livid. And yet, when the paroxysm ceased at his word, the patient felt no evil effects, not even fatigue, and all that had happened was

generally instantly forgotten. The case created an immense sensation throughout Europe, and the great men of his age took part for or against the poor priest, who was sadly persecuted, and only now and then found a really able advocate, such as Lavater.[Pg 446] The heaviest penalty he had to bear was the condemnation of his own Church, which accompanied an order issued by the Emperor Joseph II., peremptorily forbidding all further attempts. The pope, Pius VII., who had directed the whole subject to be examined by the well-known *Congregatio SS. Rituum*, declared in 1777, upon their report, that the priest's proceedings were heretical and not any longer to be permitted, and ordered the bishop, under whose jurisdiction he lived, to prevent any further exercise of his pretended power. All these decrees of papal councils and these orders of imperial officials could, however, not undo what the poor priest had already accomplished, and history has taught us the relative value of investigations held by biased priests, and those carried out by men of science. We may well doubt the judgment of an authority which once condemned a Galileo, and even now denounces the press as a curse; but we have no right to suspect the opinion of men who, as physicians and scientists, are naturally disposed to reject all claims of supernatural or even exceptional powers.

In more recent times a Prince Hohenlohe in Germany claimed to have performed a number of miraculous cures, beginning with a Princess Schwarzenberg, whom he commanded "in the name of Christ to be well again." Many of his patients, however, were only cured for the moment; when their faith, excited to the utmost, cooled down again, their infirmities returned; still there remain facts enough in his life to establish[Pg 447] the marvelous power of his strong will, when brought to bear upon peculiarly receptive imaginations, and aided by earnest prayer. (Kies., *Archiv*. IX. ii: 311.)

Sporadic cases of similar powers have of late shown themselves in Paris, in the interior of Russia, and in Ravenna, but the evidence upon which the statements in public journals are made is so clearly unreliable that no important result can be hoped for from their investigation. The present is hardly an age of faith, and enough has surely been said to prove that without very great and sincere faith miraculous cures cannot be performed.[Pg 448]

X.

MYSTICISM.

"Credo quia absurdum est."—TERTULLIAN.

One of the most remarkable classes of magic phenomena, which combines almost all other known features of trances with the peculiar kind called stigmatization, is known as Mysticism in the more limited sense of that word. It bears this name mainly because it designates attempts made to unite in close communion humanity with divinity, and however imperfect the success of all these efforts may be, on the whole, it cannot be denied that in individual cases very startling results have been obtained. In order to attain their lofty aim, the mystics require an utter deadening of all human affections and all natural impulses, and a thorough change of their usual

thoughts and feelings. Above all, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of the heart are to be killed by pain; hence the mystics are quite content to suffer, chastise the body, deny themselves the simplest enjoyments, and rejoice in the actual infliction of wounds and mutilations. In return for this complete deadening of human affections they are filled with an ineffable love of the divine Saviour, the Bridegroom, and the Holy Virgin, the Bride, or even of purely abstract, impalpable beings.[Pg 449] They enjoy great inner comforts, and a sense of happiness and peace which transcends all description. Whatever may, however, have been the direct cause of their ecstatic condition, disease, asceticism, self-inflicted torments, or long-continued fervent prayer, this highest bliss is accorded to them only during the time of trance. Unfortunately this period of happiness is not only painfully short, but also invariably followed by a powerful reaction; according to the laws of our nature, supreme excitement must needs always subside into profound exhaustion, ecstatic bliss into heartrending despondency, and bright visions of heaven into despairing views of unpardonable sins and a hopeless future. Hence the fearful doctrines of the mystics of all ages, which prescribe continuous self-denial as the only way to reach God, who as yet is not to be found in the outward world, but only in the inner consciousness of the believer. If the sinner dare not hope to approach the Holy One, the repentant believer also is in unceasing danger of losing again what he has gained by fearful sacrifices. The union between him and his God must not only be close, but uninterrupted, a doctrine which has led to the great favor bestowed by mystics upon images derived from earthly love: to them God is forever the bridegroom, the soul the bride, and the union between them the true marriage of the faithful. By such training, skillfully and perseveringly pursued, many persons, especially women, have succeeded in so completely deadening all physical functions of[Pg 450] their body as to reduce their life, literally, to the mere operations of sensation and vision. The sufferings produced by these efforts to suppress all natural vitality, to kill, as it were, the living body, rendering the senses inactive, while still in the full vigor of their natural condition, are often not only painful, but actually appalling. A poor woman, famous for her asceticism and her supernatural visions, Maria of Agreda, was never able to attend to her devotions in the dark, without enduring actual agony. Her spiritual light would suddenly become extinguished, fearful horrors fell upon her soul and caused her unspeakable anguish, terrible images as of wild beasts and fierce demons surrounded her, the air was filled with curses and unbearable blasphemies, and even her body was seized with wild, convulsive movements and violent spasms. No wonder, therefore, that numbers of these mystics have lost their reason, and others have fallen victims to terrible diseases. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that many also have been eminent examples of self-denial and matchless devotion, or genuine heroes in combating for their sacred faith and the love of their brethren. Their very errors were so attractive that the fundamental mistake was forgotten, and all felt how little, men who act upon mere ordinary motives, are able to rise to the same height of self-sacrifice. Nor must it be forgotten, in judging especially the mystics of our days, that their sincerity can never be doubted: they have always acted, and still act upon genuine conviction, and in the firm belief that their work is[Pg 451] meritorious, not in the eyes of men, but before the Almighty. The ascetics of former ages are not so easily understood; they were men who proposed not only to limit the amenities of life, but to make our whole earthly existence subservient to purely divine purposes; and thus, for instance, Francis of Assisi, prescribed absolute poverty as the rule of his order. The principal magic phenomena accompanying religious ecstasy are the insensibility of the body to all, even the most violent injuries, and the perception of matters beyond the reach of our senses in healthy life. Rigid and long-continued fasting, reduced sleep on a hard couch, and an utter

abstinence from all other thoughts or sentiments but such as connect themselves directly with a higher life, never fail to produce the desired effect. By such means the whole nature of man is finally changed; not only in the legitimate relations existing between body and mind, but also in those which connect man with nature; the changes are, therefore, as much physiological as psychical. They result at last in the acquisition of a power which in the eyes of the mystics is identical with that promised in Mark xvi. 18. "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." Extraordinary as the accounts of the sufferings and the exceptional powers of mystics appear to us, they are in many instances too well authenticated to allow any serious doubt. Thus a famous ascetic, Rosa of Lima, was actually injured by healthy food, but on many occasions instantaneously strengthened by a mere[Pg 452] mouthful of bread dipped into pure water; Bernard of Clairvaux lived for a considerable time on beech-leaves boiled in water, and Maria of Oignys once subsisted for thirty-five days on the holy wafer of the sacrament, which she took daily. Mystics who, like the latter, derived bodily sustenance as well as spiritual comfort from the Eucharist, are frequently mentioned in the annals of the Church. Others, again, succeeded by constant and extreme excitement to heat their blood to such an extent that they became insensible to outward cold, even when the frosts of winter became intolerable to others. The heart itself seems to be affected by such extreme elation; in Catherine of Siena its violent palpitations and convulsive jerkings could be both seen and felt, when she was in a state of ecstasis, and the heart of Filippo Neri was found, after death, to have been considerably enlarged, and actually to have broken two ribs by its convulsive spasms.

Among the rarer but equally well-established magic phenomena of this class must be counted the temporary suspension of the law of gravity. Like the Brahmins of India, who have long possessed the power of raising themselves unaided from the ground and of remaining suspended in the air, Christian mystics also have been seen, more than once, to hang as it were unsupported high above the ground. They quote, in support of their faith in such exceptional powers, the fact that Habakkuk also was seized by an angel and carried away through the air, while even the Saviour was taken[Pg 453] by the devil to an exceeding high mountain on the top of the temple, cases in which the laws of gravity must have been similarly suspended.

A large number of holy men, among whom were Filippo Neri, Ignatius Loyola, and the founder of the order of Dominicans, remained thus suspended in the air for hours and days; one of them, the Carmelite monk P. Dominicus, in the presence of the king and queen of Spain and their whole court. (Calmet, p. 153.) There are even cases known in which this raising of the body has happened to pious persons against their own desire and to their great and sincere distress, as it attracted public attention in a most painful degree. To this class of phenomena belongs also the luminous appearance which seems at times to accompany a high state of religious excitement. This was already the case with Moses, who "wist not that the skin of his face shone," and probably of Stephen also, when those "that sat in council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

The most startling of these phenomena, however, are those known as stigmatization, when the combined power of fervent, exalted faith and an over-excited imagination produces actual marks of injuries on the body, although no such injuries have ever been inflicted. The annals of the Church abound with instances of women especially who, after long meditation on the nature and the merits of crucifixion have borne the marks of nails in hands and feet, an effect which the[Pg 454] science of medicine also admits as possible, inasmuch as similar results are of not

unfrequent occurrence, at least in newborn infants, whose bodies are marked in consequence of events which had recently made a peculiarly deep impression upon the mothers.

Unfortunately mysticism also has not been able to keep its votaries free from an admixture of imposture. False miracles are known to have occurred within the Church as well as without it, and credulity has accepted many a statement that could not have stood the simplest investigation. It becomes the careful student, therefore, here also to distinguish with the utmost caution genuine and well-authenticated facts from reckless or willfully false statements. Even then, however, he ought not to forget the words of Pascal, who, in speaking of the apostles said: "I am quite willing to believe stories for whose truthfulness the witnesses have suffered death." It is even by no means improbable that the spiritual world may have its changing productions as well as the material world, and as the organisms of the Silurian period are impossible in our day, so-called magic results may have been obtained by certain former generations which lie beyond the power of our own. No one can with certainty determine, in this direction, what is possible and what is impossible; the power of man is emphatically a relative one, and each exploit must, in fairness, be judged with a view to all the accompanying circumstances. It is as impossible for the men of our day to erect pyramids such as the[Pg 455] old Egyptians built, as it is for an individual in good health to perform feats of strength of which he may be capable under the influence of high fever or violent paroxysms.

A curious feature in these phenomena is the intimate relation in which sacred and so-called demoniac influences seem to stand with one another. The saints are represented as tempted by evil spirits which yet have no existence except in their own heart, and the possessed, on the other hand, occasionally have pious impulses and holy thoughts. In the former case it is the innate sinfulness of the heart which creates images of demons such as St. Anthony saw in the desert; in the latter case the guardian angels of men are said to come to their rescue. There are even instances on record of men who have wantonly given themselves up to the temporary influence of evil spirits—under the impression that they could thus please God!—as travelers purposely suffer the evil effects of opium or hasheesh in order to test their powers. Thus mysticism finally devised a complete system of angels, saints, and demons, whose varied forms and peculiarities became familiar to votaries at an early period of their lives, and filled their minds with images which afterwards assumed an apparent reality during the state of trance. That the physical condition enters as a powerful element in all these phenomena appears clearly from the fact that whenever women are liable to trances or visions of this kind the latter vary regularly with their state of health,[Pg 456] and in the majority of cases cease at a certain age. This fact illustrates in a very characteristic manner the mutual relations between body and soul; the condition of the former is reflected in the soul by sentiment and image, and the soul in precisely the same manner impresses itself upon the body. Generally this is limited to the face, where the features in their expression reproduce more or less faithfully what is going on within; but in exceptional cases the psychical events cause certain mechanical or physical changes in the body which now and then result in actual illness or become even fatal. Experience proves that if the imagination is stimulated to excessive activity, it can produce changes in the nature of the epidermis or even of the mucous membrane, which resemble in everything the symptoms of genuine diseases. There are men who can, by an energetic effort of will, cause red spots, resembling inflammation, to appear in almost every part of the body. In extreme cases this power extends to the production of syncope, in which they become utterly insensible to injuries of any kind, lose all power of motion, and even cease to breathe. St. Augustine mentions a number of such cases. (*De civit.*

Dei, l. xiv. ch. 24.) The remarkable power of Colonel Townshend of falling into a state of syncope is too well established to admit of any doubt; he became icy cold and rigid, his heart ceased to beat and his lungs to breathe; the face turned deadly pale, the features grew sharp and pointed, and his eyes remained fixed. By an[Pg 457] effort of his own will he could recall himself to life, but one evening, when he tried to repeat the experiment, after having made it in the morning successfully in the presence of three physicians, he failed to awake again. It appeared afterwards that his heart was diseased; he had, however, at the same time, by careful attention and long practice, obtained almost perfect control over that organ. (Cheyne, "Engl. Malady," London, 1733, p. 307.) Indian fakirs have been known to possess a similar power, and have allowed themselves to be buried in air-tight graves, where they have been watched at times for forty days, by military guards, and yet at the expiration of that time have returned to life without apparent injury. A similar power over less vital organs of the body is by no means rare; men are constantly found who can at will conceal their tongue so that even surgeons discover it but with difficulty; others, like Justinus Kerner, can empty their stomachs of their contents as if they were pockets, or contract and enlarge the pupils of the eyes at pleasure. Nor are cases of Indians and negroes rare, who in their despair have died merely because they willed it so. There can be no doubt, therefore, that if mere volition can produce such extraordinary results, still more exceptional effects may be obtained by fervent faith and an excessive stimulation of the whole nervous system, and much that appears either incredible or at least in the highest degree marvelous may find an easy and yet satisfactory explanation.[Pg 458]

Genuine stigmatization, that is, the appearance of the five wounds of our Saviour, presents itself ordinarily only after many years of constant meditation of his passion, combined with excessive fasting and other ascetic self-torment. The first stage is apt to be a vision of Christ's suffering, accompanied by the offer of a wreath of flowers or a crown of thorns. If the mystic chooses the former, the result remains within the limits of the general effects of asceticism; should he, however, choose the crown of thorns, the stigmas themselves are apt to appear. This occurs, naturally, only in the very rare cases, where the mystic possesses that exceptional energy and intense plastic power of the imagination which are requisite in order to suspend the natural relations of soul and body. Then the latter, already thoroughly weakened and exhausted, becomes so susceptible to the influence of the soul, that it reproduces, spontaneously and unconsciously, the impressions deeply engraven on the mind, and during the next ecstatic visions the wounds show themselves suddenly. Their appearance is invariably accompanied by violent pain, which seems to radiate, in fiery burning darts from the wounds of the image of Christ. As the minds of mystics differ infinitely in energy of will and clearness of perception, the stigmas also are seen more or less distinctly; and their nature varies from mere reddish points, which become visible on the head, as the effect of a crown of thorns, to real bleeding wounds. The former are apt to disappear as the excitement subsides[Pg 459] or the will is weakened; the latter, however, are peculiar in this, that they do not continue to bleed, and yet, also, do not heal up. In women, only, they are apt to break out again at regular intervals, for instance, on Fridays, when the mystic excitement again reaches its highest degree, or at other periods when pressure of blood seeks an outlet through these new openings. As such a state can continue only by means of lengthened inflammation, stigmatization is always accompanied by violent pains and great suffering, especially during the bleeding.

The earliest of all cases of stigmatization—of which nearly seventy are fully authenticated—was that of Francis of Assisi, who, after having spent years in fervent prayer for permission to share

the sufferings of the Saviour, at last saw a seraph with six wings descend toward him, and between the wings the form of a crucified person. At the same moment he felt piercing pains, and when he recovered from his trance he found his hands and feet, as well as his side, bleeding as from severe wounds, and strange, dark excrescences, resembling nails, protruding from the wounds in his extremities. As this was the first case of stigmatization known, Francis of Assisi was filled with grave doubts concerning the strange phenomenon, and carefully concealed it from all but his most intimate friends. Still the wounds were seen and felt by Pope Alexander and a number of cardinals during his lifetime, and became an object of careful investigation after his death. (Philalethes'[Pg 460] *Divina Comm., Paradiso*, p. 144.) There is but one other case, as fully authenticated, in which a man was thus stigmatized; all other trustworthy instances are related of females. How close the connection is between the will and the appearance of these phenomena may be seen from one of the best-established cases, that of Joanna of Burgos, in Spain, who had shed much blood every week for twenty years in following the recital of the passion of our Saviour. When she was seventy years old, her superiors prevailed upon her, by special arguments, to pray fervently for a suspension of her sufferings. She threw herself down before a crucifix, and remained there a day and a night in incessant prayer; on the next morning the wounds had closed, and never again commenced bleeding. Another evidence of this feature lies in the fact that stigmatization occurs mainly in Italy, the land of imagination, and in Spain, the land of devotion; in Germany only a few cases are known, and not one in the North of Europe and in America.

Among the famous mystics who do not belong as saints or martyrs exclusively to the Church, stand first and foremost Henry Suso, of the "Living Heart," and John Ruysbroek, the so-called Doctor Ecstaticus. The former, who often had trances, and once lay for a long time in syncope, has left behind him some of the most attractive works ever written by religious enthusiasts. He lived in the fourteenth century, and when, two hundred years later, his grave was opened the body was[Pg 461] found unchanged, and fervent admirers believed they perceived pleasing odors emanating from the remains. The Dutch divine Ruysbroek was even more renowned by his holy life and admirable writings than by the many marvelous visions which he enjoyed. The same century produced the most famous preacher Germany has probably ever seen, John Capistran, who attracted the masses by the magic power of his individuality and held them spell-bound by his burning eloquence. A native of Capistrano, in the Abruzzi, where he was born in 1385, he became first a lawyer, and gained great distinction as such in Sicily. Unfortunately he was engaged in one of the many petty wars which at that time distracted Italy; was made a prisoner and cast with barbaric cruelty into a foul dungeon. Here he devoted himself to ascetic devotion, and had a vision ordering him to leave the world. When he regained his liberty, at the age of thirty, he entered the order of Franciscan monks, and soon became a preacher of world-wide renown. Traveling through Italy, Hungary, and Germany, he affected his audiences by his mere appearance, and produced truly amazing changes in the hearts of thousands. In Vienna he once preached, in the open air, before an assembly of more than a hundred thousand men; the people listened to him for hours amid loud weeping and sobbing, and great numbers were converted, including several hundred Jews. In Bohemia he induced in like manner eleven thousand Hussites to return to the Catholic Church, among whom were[Pg 462] numerous noblemen and ministers. Similar successes were obtained in almost every large town of Germany, till he was recalled to the South, when Germany became indebted to him and to John Corvin for its deliverance from the Turks and the famous victory of Belgrade in 1456. During his whole career he continued to have ecstatic visions, to fall into trances of considerable duration, and to behold stigmas on his

body—yet, withal, he remained an eminently practical man, not only converting many thousands from their religious errors, but turning them also from vicious habits and criminal pursuits to a life of virtue. At the same time he rendered signal services to his brethren in mere worldly matters, now pleading and now fighting for them with an energy and a success which alone would secure him a name in history. The ecstatic nature of another mystic, Vincentio Ferrer, produced a singular effect, which has never been noticed except in biblical history. He was a native of Valencia, and, knowing no language but the local dialect of his country, he continued throughout life to preach in his mother tongue—and yet he was understood by all who heard him! This result was at least partially explained by the astounding flexibility of his voice, which at all times adapted itself so completely to his feelings, that its tones found a responsive echo in every heart. In vain did the pope, Benedict XIII., offer him first a bishopric and afterwards a cardinal's hat; the pious monk refused all honors save one, the title of Papal Missionary, and[Pg 463] in this capacity he passed through nearly every land in Christendom, preaching and exhorting day and night, exciting everywhere the utmost enthusiasm and converting thousands from their evil ways. His eloquence and fervor were so great that even learned men and fierce warriors declared he spoke with the voice of an angel, and criminals of deepest dye would fall down in the midst of great crowds, confessing their misdeeds and solemnly vowing repentance and amendment.

The greatest of all mystics, however, was the before-mentioned Filippo Neri, a saint of the Catholic Church, whose simple candor and truly Christian humility have procured for him the esteem and the admiration of men of all creeds and all ages. Even as a mere child he was already renowned for his extraordinary gifts as well as for his fervent piety; while still a layman he had numerous visions and trances, and when in his thirtieth year he had prayed for days and nights in the Catacombs of St. Sebastian, his heart became suddenly so enlarged that some of the intercostal muscles gave way, and a great swelling appeared on the outside, which remained there throughout life, although without causing him any pain. His inner fervor was so great as to keep his blood and his whole system continually at fever heat, and although he lived exclusively upon bread, herbs, and olives, he never wore warm clothes, even in the severest winters, always slept with open doors and windows, and preferred walking about with his breast uncovered. During the last ten years of his[Pg 464] life his body was no longer able to sustain his ecstatic soul; whenever he attempted to read mass or to preach, his feelings became so excited that his voice failed him, and he fell into a trance of several hours' duration. It was in this condition that he was frequently lifted up, together with the chair on which he sat, to a height of several feet from the ground. What renders these magic phenomena peculiarly interesting, is the fact that Filippo Neri not only attached no special value to them, but actually did his best to conceal them from the eyes of the world. As soon as they began to show themselves, he ceased reading mass in the presence of others, and only allowed his attendant to re-enter his cell when the latter had convinced himself, by peeping through a narrow opening in the door, that the trance was over. When others praised his piety and marveled at these wonders, he invariably smiled and said: "Don't you know that I am nothing but a fool and a dreamer?"

He added that he would infinitely rather do works which should prove his faith than be the recipient of miraculous favors. But his prestige was so great that whenever he was prevailed upon or thought it his duty to exert his influence, it was paramount, and secured to him a powerful control in historical events. Thus it was when Pope Gregory XIV. had excommunicated King Henry IV., and his successor, Clement VIII., continued the fearful

punishment in spite of all the entreaties of king and courtiers. Filippo Neri, foreseeing the dangers which were likely to arise from such[Pg 465] measures for the Church, and deeply concerned for the welfare of the French people, retired to prayer, inviting the pope's confessor to join him in his devotions. These had been continued for three days without intermission, when at last the saint fell into a trance, and upon re-awaking from it, told his companion: "To-day the pope will send for you to confess him. You will tell him, when his confession is made: 'Father Filippo has directed me to refuse Your Holiness absolution, and ever to confess you again till you have relieved the King of France from excommunication.'" Clement, deeply moved by this message, summoned immediately the council of cardinals, and Henry IV. was once more received into the bosom of the Church. In spite of this great influence, Neri sternly refused all honors and dignities, even the purple, which was offered to him three times, and died in 1595, eighty years old, on the day and at the hour which he had long since foretold. That his visions were accompanied by actual stigmatization has already been mentioned.

Our own continent has had but one great mystic, Rosa of Lima, who is hence known as *primus Americæ meridionalis flos*. She had inherited her peculiar organization from her mother, who had frequently seen visions, and when the child was three years old, changed her name from Isabel to Rosa, because she had seen a rose suspended over the face of her daughter. Much admired on account of her great beauty and rare sweetness, the young girl refused all offers, and preferred, in[Pg 466] spite of the remonstrances of friends and of brutal ill-treatment on the part of her brothers, to enter a convent. On her way there, however, she felt her steps suddenly arrested by superior force, and saw in this supernatural interruption a hint that she should leave the world even more completely than she could have done as a nun of the Order of St. Dominick. She built herself, therefore, a little cell in her father's garden, and here led a life of ecstatic asceticism, during which she often remained for days and weeks without food, and became strangely intimate with birds and insects. Whenever she took the eucharist, she felt marvelous happiness and fell into trances; in the intervals, however, she suffered intensely from that depression and utter despair which in such cases are apt to result from powerful reaction. She died quite young, exhausted by her ascetic life and continued excitement, and has ever since been revered as the patron saint of Peru.

THE END.

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TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE:

Obvious typographical errors in punctuation and spelling have been corrected without comment. One example of an obvious typographical error is on page 109 where the word "utterred" was changed to "uttered" in the phrase: "... he uttered a piercing cry...."

In addition to obvious errors the following changes have been made:

1. Page 376: The phrase "as early in 1773" was changed to "as early as 1773".
2. Page 119: "cocoa" was changed to "coca" in the phrase, "... opium, betel, hasheesh, and coca...."
3. Page 209: "Aureditated" was changed to "Accredited" to reflect the correct title of Jarvis' book: "Accredited Ghost Stories".
4. Page 211: "Aured." was changed to "Accred." in the phrase, "Accred. Ghost Stories".
5. Page 234: "aids" was changed to "aides" in the phrase, "General d'Espagne roused his aides...."

The spelling of most proper names has been left unchanged with the following exceptions:

1. "Göethe", "Goëthe" and "Goethe" has been standardized to "Goethe".

2. Page 109: "Shilling" was changed to "Stilling" (Jung Stilling, author of "Jenseits" cf. pp. 156, 204, 320).

3. Page 235: "Marca Erivigiana" was changed to "Marca Trivigiana".

4. Page 260: "Waltyries" was changed to "Walkyries" in the phrase, "Walkyries and the heroes...."

5. Page 376: "Eassner" was changed to "Gassner" (cf. p. 441) in the phrase, "... famous Father Gassner ... of Ratisbon...."

6. Page 402: "Mondez" was changed to "Mondes" in the Journal title, "Revue des Deux Mondes", (cf. p. 408).

In other cases, the author's original spelling and use of punctuation has been left intact. Internal inconsistencies which have been retained in this transcription as in the original include (but are not limited to):

apostacy/ apostasy
pickolitch/ prickolitch
Æthiopian/ Ethiopian
aurora boreales/ aurora borealis

On page 319: "... Thus in 1578 a famous astrologer, the father of all weather prophecies in our almanacs, predicted that in the month of February, 1524...."

On page 287: the phrase, "... mutters the word One...." has been retained as printed, but may be intended as "... mutters the word Om...."

Item number 18 is missing from the Ad page.